

Louisiana State University LSU Digital Commons

LSU Doctoral Dissertations

Graduate School

2005

Leona Queyrouze (1861-1938): Louisiana French Creole poet, essayist, and composer

Donna M. Meletio

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, dmelet1@lsu.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Meletio, Donna M., "Leona Queyrouze (1861-1938): Louisiana French Creole poet, essayist, and composer" (2005). *LSU Doctoral Dissertations*. 2146.

https://digitalcommons.lsu.edu/gradschool_dissertations/2146

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at LSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in LSU Doctoral Dissertations by an authorized graduate school editor of LSU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact gradetd@lsu.edu.

LEONA QUEYROUZE (1861-1938) LOUISIANA FRENCH CREOLE POET,
ESSAYIST, AND COMPOSER

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

In

The Department of English

by

Donna M. Meletio

B.A., University of Texas San Antonio, 1990

M.A., University of Texas San Antonio, 1994

August, 2005

©Copyright 2005
Donna M. Meletio
All rights reserved

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

For their support throughout this project and for their patience and love, I would like to thank my daughters, Sarah, Maegan, and Kate, who are the breath and heart of my life. I would also like to thank the strong and beautiful women and men who have walked through this life journey with me: my life-long friend Dr. Denise Baskind and her husband Steve, my sister Mary Ann Appleby and her husband Bob, Mary Siffert, Susan and Steve Caspers, Lomeda Montgomery, Pat Nover and Greg, Eileen, and my wonderful family: my mother, my brothers Carl, Larry, and Richard; Mike and Tami Slater, Ken Jury, and Quintin Stansell.

While I was LSU, I met many brilliant and compassionate people in the doctoral program, and if it were not for Shelisa Theus, Susie Kuilan, and Terri and Ryan Ruckel who offered love, encouragement, and academic passion, this path would have been too hard to travel. I would also like to offer my heartfelt thanks to my committee, Dr. John Lowe, Dr. Carolyn Ware, Dr. John Rodrigue, and Dr. Qiancheng Li who made this project possible. Last, I would like to thank one of the most remarkable teachers I have ever met, my director, Dr. Edward White, whose humor and kindness always gave me courage.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	7
CHAPTER TWO: “WHO ARE THE CREOLES?”.....	43
CHAPTER THREE: <i>VIEUX CARRÉ</i>	67
CHAPTER FOUR: THE SALON CULTURE AS A FOLK GROUP.....	92
CHAPTER FIVE: POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONFLICT.....	126
CHAPTER SIX: QUEYROUZE IN LITERARY CONTEXT AMERICAN AND FRENCH.....	173
CONCLUSION.....	216
WORKS CITED.....	223
APPENDIX: POETRY.....	234
VITA.....	280

ABSTRACT

This new historicist study chronicles the life and work of a Louisiana French Creole, Leona Queyrouze (1861-1938) who grew up in the turbulent era following the Civil War. Her articles and poetry, mostly written in French, were published in the local periodicals, *L'Abeille*, *Comptes-Rendus*, the *Picayune* and the *Crusader* under the pseudonyms, Constant Beauvais, Salamandra, and Adamas. She also translated plays from French into English in New York under at the request of *Harpers Bazar* and wrote two symphonies that were performed at the World Exposition in New Orleans in 1884.

Through an ever-widening critical lens, I focus upon her personal life, her ethnic identity as a Creole, the *Vieux Carré*, and her salon that included such notables as writer Mollie Moore Davis, Charles Gayarré, historian; Paul Morphy, chess player; Dr. Alfred Mercier, novelist and dramatist; General P.G. T. Beauregard, Adrien Rouquette, bohemian poet-priest, and Lafcadio Hearn who later became an important figure in the fusion of eastern and western literature. Her salon functioned as a folk group, one that created the *Athénée* for the preservation of French culture through its literary organ, the *Comptes-Rendus*. In the symbolic acts of conservatism and dynamism, according to the twin laws of folklore, they were instrumental in preserving the French Creole culture at the same time they were factors in its change.

In her writing, Queyrouze addresses the key issues of the period and calls for egalitarian reform and suffrage even as she struggled with her own elitism and assumptions of racial hierarchy. In the final analysis, I compare her work to that of mainstream American writers, such as Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Mary E. Wilkins

Freeman, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Kate Chopin who were calling for social reform from *within* the patriarchal social structure while Queyrouze was positioning herself as an outsider in work that was both elegiac and rebellious. Contrary to the Protestantism and realism of her counterparts, including George Washington Cable, Queyrouze followed the French romantic aesthetic traditions codified by Victor Hugo and Alfred de Musset, and as such, her work challenges our notions of a monolithic American literature.

INTRODUCTION

I discovered Leona Queyrouze in the summer of 1995 when I retreated from a summer storm into a museum off Jackson Square in New Orleans. As the rain continued to pour outside, I walked the halls of the Cabildo museum looking at portraits of kings, bishops, statesmen, and aristocrats. After a while, I came upon the arresting face of a serious young woman in a simple gown. Leona Queyrouze Barel-- the placard read--poet, essayist and composer. Intrigued, I asked a woman at the desk for more information about her, and she promised to send some to me. That moment was the beginning of a long journey into the research of her life and work, the French Creole culture, and the history and politics of the region. What emerged was a person as complex as the time and place she lived. Leona grew up in a time when the face of our nation was changing and when the conflict of the Civil War illuminated the vast ideological differences in our country. In this time of sweeping change and growth, America was a vast flood taking all with it, and cultures that had been dominant in certain areas of the country either became part of the mainstream or were left behind. While many ethnic groups successfully assimilated into American culture, the French Creoles consciously chose to separate themselves. Whether this was due to French chauvinism or as a reaction against Anglo-Saxonism as described by Nell Painter's *Standing at Armageddon*, the Creoles orchestrated their own demise. Their story, however, is one aspect of American history that deserves recognition because it demonstrates the dilemma faced by many ethnic cultures: If the French Creoles defined themselves by their own ethnic markers and pitted themselves against the Anglo-Americans, they risked marginalization, but if they did not take that risk, they faced an untenable situation—the loss of their heritage. In the latter case, the Creoles loss is our

own, for we lose the depth and richness that this culture would have offered, and we also lose the ability to see our history and our society in all of its complexity. This intersection of conflicting dynamics between dominant and non-dominant cultures is one worthy of investigation because it demonstrates how cultural differentiation can affect the inclusion of an ethnic group into mainstream culture. To that end, a study of the French Creole culture, and particularly the personal observations of one of its members in the person of Leona Queyrouze can enhance our understanding of our own cultural and political history. According to Marc Shell and Werner Sollors, the value of such a study can “bring about a much-needed reorientation in historical consciousness [. . . that] may force readers to question past and current generalizations about literature and history of the United States” (9-10). This has been the ultimate goal of my study, and the key in achieving this objective is to focus on those who experienced the tumultuous period while being powerless to effect any change or exert any influence other than to share their opinions through personal correspondence and through the publication of commentary in the newspapers. Edward L. Ayers points out that “new chronologies and issues emerge when we look beyond the public realm, when we explore the diaries and fiction as well as editorial and political correspondence” (vii). Such is the case for Leona Queyrouze who published her opinions under her own name and under the names of Constant Beauvais, *Salamandra* (Greek: “Fire-lizard,” symbol of unshakable courage and faith that cannot be destroyed by fire), and *Adamas* (Greek: “Unconquerable,” the metal used to make the swords for the gods; another name for a diamond).

Leona retained a love of French literature and culture while addressing the cause of social justice, yet, she like many others, was susceptible to social prejudice. This

investigation of Leona's Queyrouze's letters, poetry, essays, and short stories will reveal that her political views were more complex than the polarizing public debates of the period, which were predominantly divided along partisan lines. She explored ideas in a manner that was a contradiction of sympathies and allegiances, and a study of her life reveals that she was as complicated as the Creole culture itself. She was one of the many forgotten voices in a tumultuous historical period, a voice then can only be described as a *mosaïque* of sentiments, which is understandable in someone who experienced first-hand the political and social upheaval the late nineteenth century. The objective of this dissertation is to retrieve a portion of our past according to the treatise set forth by Frederic Jameson who asserts that a slice of history should be "returned to life and warmth and allowed once more to speak, and to deliver its long-forgotten message" ("On Interpretation"19). In pursuit of this goal, this study will provide an intimate glimpse into the life of a woman who articulates the grieving process of cultural loss through her poetry, essays, and speeches.

There are several applications to this dissertation that serve its structure and intent. First, because this study is a precursor to a critical biography, I have written the first four chapters in a narrative style and have referred to Leona Queyrouze as "Leona" rather than by her last name. These chapters focus on her with a "close-up lens," including a biographical sketch, the definition of the term *Creole*, a description of her environment, and a study of her salon as it functioned as folk group. These angles will investigate all aspects surrounding her life, including the sights and sounds of her streets, the headlines of newspapers, her intimate companions, her family, and the people she loved. As my focus shifts towards the political and literary landscape-- and as the camera

lens widens to capture the panorama of these issues-- Leona Queyrrouze becomes more peripheral and the perspective more impersonal.

Second, I will use a new historicist infrastructure as a foundation in order to demonstrate how Leona both defined her culture and was defined by it. Utilizing the theoretical foundations of Michael Foucault, Gottfried von Herder, and Clifford Geertz, as applied by Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagher, I will use the new historicist lens to reveal how her culture becomes the text that is articulated through her work. Her oeuvre will be contextualized as it embodies and represents a constructed zeitgeist that cannot be separated from the value system inherent in any social system. Greenblatt and Gallagher believe that through this perspective, we can retrieve “figures hitherto kept outside the proper circles of interest,” such as the “learned women excluded from easy access to the materials of scholarship” (9-10). One goal of new historicism is to bring these marginalized voices “into the light of critical attention” (11) because these voices “did not spring up from nowhere . . . their achievements must draw upon a whole life-world” (13). Thus, we must “treat them as part of the history that needs to be interpreted” (15). Equally important to my study is the fact that while new historicism is “deeply interested in the collective, it remains committed to the value of the single voice” (16).

Leona Queyrrouze’s work will be subjected to folkloristic inquiry that investigates not only the definition of the text, but the function it serves. Ormond Loomis states that because “culture is essentially abstract and ineffable,” we must rely on “cultural *expression*, the overt evidence of cultural identity” (7); therefore, a study of a cultural text can “serve to inform future generations of their cultural past” (3) Pursuant to this, I will apply the definition of the folk group to the Queyrrouze salon, as described by Dan Ben-

Amos, Harris Berger, Giovanna Del Negro, Richard Dorson, Alan Dundes, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, and Elliott Oring to show that this salon was an expressive folk group consciously attempting to safeguard its cultural markers in the face of rising Americanization.

Third, I have inserted significant passages from original unpublished manuscripts to serve as a departure point for other scholars who may not have immediate access to Louisiana State University's Hill Memorial Library archives. My objective in making her work available is to assist critical inquiry and to serve scholarship that challenges the notion of a monolithic national literature. The overarching goal is to re-capture marginalized voices and to retrieve the faint relics of failed social constructs.

Even though the French Creole culture ultimately failed to retain its hegemony in Louisiana, an intimate study of this group juxtaposed against the larger canvas of American literature reveals both common and divergent interests and themes. In viewing the intersection of rising Americanization and the failing Creolization, one can capture what Werner Sollors describes in *Creole Echoes* as a "lost cultural moment" (xvii). He points out that the literature of the French Creoles has largely gone unrecognized "for it has tended to be marginalized in both American and French literary studies," and he concludes that this may have been caused by the fact that the literature of the period was imagined in terms of "*national* location," and writers who referred to themselves as *Creoles* were using a nationally and "*racially ambiguous* term" (xvii). He observes that these writers "often drew on French forms but at times infused them with Louisiana themes. They produced an impressive variety of highly accomplished verse" and while it is "impossible to press these heterogeneous poems into the service of any single

overarching interpretation” (xviii), these poems offer a glimpse into a culture that lost its place in the forward movement of American literary history. In the Preface to *Creole Echoes* Norman Shapiro states that “many of these almost unknown poets had produced a substantial canon that did not deserve the relative oblivion into which it had fallen” (xxii). One of those voices belonged to Leona Queyrouze, and this study serves to retrieve that lost voice.

CHAPTER ONE: BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Perhaps the most perplexing and laborious of all tasks, is to annihilate one's self so completely as to become qualified for judging; and that is what must be done to enable us to look for truth, with some safety, at ourselves and others
--"Patriotism and Wagner" Leona Queyrrouze

Leona Queyrrouze's journey towards artistic expression began over a century ago on February 23, 1861 in the parish and city of New Orleans. Mrs. Leon Queyrrouze (Anne Marie Clara Tertrou) registered Leona's birth on May 24, 1866 with the full name of Marie Léona Queyrrouze. The five year delay in the registration of her birth, according to local historians, was customary because the time to register children's births was before they entered school rather than at the time of their births. Leona's mother, Clara Tertrou, was a descendant of French aristocracy, the Cathelineaus, De St. James of Picardy and the Beauvais, some of whom came to America during the reign of Louis XIV. To honor her mother's family name, Leona would adopt the name, Constant Beauvais, as one of her pseudonyms when she began her writing career. Leona's father, Leon Queyrrouze, was born in Beaumont in the Peregrine region of France and moved to Louisiana where he met and married Clara. While it is not certain whether it was his family or his wife's that owned vineyards in France, nor is it certain how they acquired the plantation in St. Martin's parish, which was named *Leona*, records indicate that before the two Queyrrouze children were born, the family moved to New Orleans. Leon Queyrrouze registered the birth of Leona's younger brother, Maxim (Jacques Maximé) on January 5, 1870, and records show that he was born at the family home at No. 17 St. Louis Street in New

Orleans on November 27, 1866. Leon opened a grocery store with a partner on St. Louis Street near the family home. He later became a wine importer as a sole proprietor.

What survives of their time in St. Martinville (a town that was also known as “the little Paris” of Louisiana) can be found next to the St. Martin de Tours church. Next to the statue of Evangeline is the gravestone of a young Charles Tertrou, who according to family records, would have been the older brother of Leona’s mother, Clara. Clara’s ancestors were considered to have been heroes in the French revolutionary war in Vendee. Her family had lived in Picardy, but had fled France when the head of the James family had violated Richelieu’s ban against dueling. They eventually settled in Louisiana under the name of Beauvais. Clara was the daughter of Laurent Tertrou who married Louisa Beauvais. He died in 1840, and Louisa remarried to Alexander Thenet. Years later, Louisa Thenet would receive a letter from the French Academy of Sciences in Bordeaux, France, praising her granddaughter, Leona, for her literary accomplishments. Little more is known of Leona’s mother and her family, for most of her correspondence or personal papers are not included in the archive material. Most documents donated by the family concerned Leona’s papers and those of her father, Leon.

Leona’s father was born in France on February 3, 1818, the son of the first officer of Napoleon’s empire. At the age of twelve he was sent to America under the care of his uncle who was a prominent businessman in New Orleans, and his uncle sent him to college in Lexington, Kentucky, and then to Havana, Cuba (in 1833) to learn Spanish. When Leon returned to New Orleans in 1835 he went to work for his uncle. First, he worked as a clerk at “Carriere, Daran & Co.” for five years, and then became a partner.

After his marriage, Leon Queyrrouze became a wine merchant, first under the auspices of “Queyrrouze and Langsdorf,” and then as “Queyrrouze Bros.” at #17 St. Louis Street (this is now 523-5 St. Louis). However, with the advent of the Civil War, he closed his business. On April 12, 1861, he was appointed for a five year term as captain of the Orleans Guard No. 5, First Division, by Thomas O. Moore, the Governor of the State of Louisiana and commander in chief of the militia [UU-68 1:3]. He then served as major and commander of the Orleans Guard Battalion and later became a colonel under General P.G. T. Beauregard. During the Battle of Shiloh, he was wounded in the knee and convalesced at Opelousas. When he returned, he was arrested by the Union Army under General Butler who sent him to prison for two months. Refusing to sign the amnesty oath, he fled to Cuba where he worked for a brokerage business until the following year. After that he traveled to Matamoros where he served under General Mejia before returning to New Orleans. Even though the Queyrrouze family insists (as do the newspaper accounts written for his obituary) that Leon did not sign the amnesty oath when he returned, there is a document entitled “Amnesty Oath” dated August 22, 1865, signed by the justice of the peace of Ouachita parish in Louisiana with Leon’s signature [Queyrrouze Papers UU-68 1:3].

Upon his return he re-established his wine importing business under a new name, “Queyrrouze and Bois,” with a partner and then went out on his own as “Queyrrouze Co.” Records indicate that at one time his business was also located on Tchoupitoulas Street. Housed at the Historical New Orleans Collection is an 1887 Business directory that lists Leon Queyrrouze as a “Wholesale Grocer: Importer of Wines and Liquors: And dealing in all kinds of Western and Country Produce.” According to letters, he may have imported

wine from wine merchants Delhomme Freres in Bordeaux, France. Records also indicate that he retained ownership of his plantation and other properties after the war, which would have been impossible unless he had signed the oath. In 1880 he sold the Leona Plantation in St. Martin's parish to Emile L. Carriere, and among the family papers there is a certified copy of the mortgage he held on the plantation dated April 14, 1887. He also owned property in St. Landry parish. During his lifetime, he became a prominent citizen and became president of the 5th Ward in New Orleans; he was a member of the Democratic Club, the Union Francais and the Casadoras Association; he was also one the principle founders of the *Athénée Louisianais*, a society organized to preserve French culture and literature. Until the time of his death he had been active and healthy, but after a brief illness, he died at age seventy-seven on January 18, 1895. His memorials deemed him a "soldier, merchant and citizen." A lengthy funeral procession, which included the surviving soldiers of the Battalion of the New Orleans Guard, followed his casket draped with the battle flag of Shiloh.

Leona inherited her father's independent spirit, and Leon and Clara nurtured this by making certain that Leona received an extensive privately tutored education. They wanted their daughter to learn the classics in the original languages of Greek and Latin, and to study European literature, philosophy, science, art, and music. To that end, Leona would awaken every morning at five to begin her lessons while her father went to work at his store. At age fifteen, she spent time in France furthering her education. She was confirmed a Catholic and received her certificate from St. Mary's Church in New Orleans on May 20, 1880 at the age of nineteen. By the time she was a young woman, she was fluent in seven languages: French, English, Spanish, Italian German, Latin, Greek, as well

as regional Creole. Her father treated Leona as a companion, and she was an integral part of Queyrouze salon soirées. According to Norman Shapiro in *Creole Echoes* Leona's father was an "open-minded and intelligent man [who] frequently hosted soirées with the city's intellectual elite. As a young girl, Leona was permitted to attend these evening discussions, which became part of her already unorthodox education" (143). Edward Larocque Tinker in *Lafcadio Hearn's American Days* describes her education as

very different from that of the typical young person of [a] good French family. Her father was a man of excellent education, broad-minded and tolerant and his house was a rendezvous for the best Louisiana French minds of that day . . . Here they talked literature, philosophy . . . religion. . . . As she had always been the constant companion of her father, she was well-fitted to profit by these meetings, which she always attended, and very soon, her father's friends accepted her on a basis of mental equality. Her acquisitive mind broadened and she lost all the mental inhibitions, false modesty and fanatical religious ideas so often found in women of her race and class in those days. In addition, she fenced, wrote poetry, played the piano admirably and sang all the old Creole songs (263).

Some of the members of their salon included Placide Canonge, journalist, art critic, and director of the French opera house, and Paul Morphy, the champion chess player. He was the subject of the novel, *The Chess Players* written by Frances Parkinson Keyes, who used Leona's unpublished manuscript about the life of Paul as source material. Other frequent guests were General P.G.T. Beauregard, Armand Mercier, a surgeon, and his brother, Dr. Alfred Mercier, a novelist and historian. Paul Deschanel, a French author, visited the Queyrouze family in 1892. (Subsequently, he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies as a Progressive Republican in 1885, and then he became President of the Republic in 1920.) In an interview on June 29, 1932, Leona listed many of the

visitors to her home: “Our home on St. Louis street was the meeting place for Gayarré, the two famous Dr. Merciers, General Beauregard—we even entertained Paul Deschanel who became president later of France, and other celebrities” [“Reveals New Hearn Data” UU-71 7:52].

During salon gatherings, Leona often performed recitals for her guests, having mastered the piano under the tutelage of Paul Morphy’s mother. Several of her performances included an extensive catalog of works from Beethoven, Chopin, and Gottschalk, to Weber.¹ The Queyrouze Collection includes her longer works, the *Victory Military March* and the *Fantaise Indienne*, which were written for the World Cotton Centennial Exposition of 1884-5. These were performed by the 8th Calvary of the Mexican Army Band under the direction of Captain Encarnación Payen on March 25, 1885 in a musical program at the Music Hall Exposition Building.

She was an accomplished woman, well-educated and well-traveled, and one of her accomplishments included fencing. Letters in the collections indicate that she received her training in foils from C.S. Jones in New Orleans. She was so skilled, in fact, that her brother, Maxim, who had won the southern championship in fencing, admitted that his older sister surpassed him in the art. Leona also spent time in France, and the invoices and receipts from her personal papers indicate that she spent time there furthering her education.

But it is her poetry, her essays and her letters that are of most interest, because in these her independent spirit and her concern for political, social and cultural issues reveal

¹ see the list of the sheet music in her possession in the Queyrouze Papers [X-97 9:67-89], as well as her own compositions, including “The Summer Husband,” “The Last Sigh of the Dude,” “The Passerby,” and “At the Ball” [X-97 9:66].

themselves. She published under four names (her own, Constant Beauvais, Salamandra, and Adamas) in a variety of publications, including the *Times Democrat*, *L'Abeille*, *The Crusader*, and *Les Comptes Rendus de l'Athénée Louisianais*. Her first published essay was "Etude on Racine" [UU-71 8:60], and she held a reading of this for the *Athénée Louisianais* at the request of the president and founder, Dr. Alfred Mercier. The event was held at the Grunewald Hall on Baronne Street. Leona was the only woman granted membership in the *Athénée*, and Dr. Mercier proclaimed "that her intellectual development was so rapid . . . [that she should be] considered a fellow-scholar and thinker" ["A Distinguished Lady of the Crescent City" UU-71 7:52]. According to biographical sketches in various periodical articles found in the archive, Queyrouze is credited as the first woman to give a speech in public in the city; indeed, this was the first time in Louisiana history that a woman had read her own work in public. She later presented two essays in two separate conferences; the first one was entitled *L'Indulgence* [UU-71 8:60]. Presented at the Union Francaise, this speech was a plea for religious tolerance, and it was favorably received. As a result of this conference she received the appellation "the Creole philosopher," a term coined by a London journalist who had attended the conference. Her work was also published in the New Orleans Spanish language newspaper, *El Moro de Paz*, and the *El Buscapie* in Puerto Rico.

Her second conference paper, "Patriotism and Wagner" was presented on June 3, 1887 at the Continental Guards Armory on Camp Street. Under the sponsorship of Alfred Mercier, P.G.T. Beauregard, and Placide Canonge and after an introduction by Charles Gayarré, Leona mounted a clear and strong argument regarding the passion and prejudice of patriotism, and she discussed the true meaning and responsibility of liberty, tyranny,

violence, justice, reason and ignorance [“Patriotism and Wagner” UU-70 6:47] As with any powerful political position, her speech received mixed reviews. Although it was a “physical, metaphysical interpretation that astonished and charmed” [“Distinguished Lady” UU-71 7:52], it nevertheless resulted in a flood of controversy, and she was accused of being too fervently patriotic and too loyal to France. Undaunted, she published a heated response in the newspaper that defended her love of France and made no apologies for her position.

One of her greatest accomplishments was her recognition by the Academy of Sciences at Bordeaux in France for her poem “*Vision*” (See appendix for complete text in French and English). First published in the *Comptes Rendus*, it was later published on July 9, 1885 in the French newspaper, *le Nouveliste de la Gironde* and received recognition and acclaim. The president of the Academy, Mr. Combes applauded the beauty of her language, saying in a published letter to M. A. Thenet dated January 28, 1885, “*Ce sont de beaux vers que ceux que vous avez bien voulu m’offrir de la part de Mlle Leona Queyrouze, votre petite-fille, et il y a là l’imagination et l’âme d’une vrai poète de l’école de Lamartine et de Victor Hugo*” [UU-71 7 :52]. (“These are beautiful verses, those you have offered from Mlle Leona Queyrouze, your granddaughter, and in them is the imagination and the soul of a true poet in the same school of Lamartine and Victor Hugo.”) Other poems that were widely read and favorably received were “Atlas,” “*Ce qu’ont dit les montagnes*,” “Magdalena,” “*Moise*,” and “Samson” among many others. Two of her sonnets, which were dedicated to the French Republic and to President Sadi-Carnot, were read at the French colony in New Orleans; this event was presided over by the French consul, Bosseron d’Anglade on October 13, 1893, to commemorate the arrival

of the Russian fleet at Toulon, France. The commander of the fleet, Admiral Makaroff, personally thanked Leona for her work.

While Leona sought recognition for her work, she also used these opportunities to express her point of view on such issues as culture, race, politics, literature, art and music. Her concerns ranged from her own community to those in America and in Europe, and her correspondence included exchanges with her circle of friends, many of whom were prominent community leaders, such as Charles Gayarré, Placide Canonge, Charles Testut (author of poems, historical novels, and *Portraits Littéraires de la Nouvelle-Orléans*); Dr. Alfred Bubos who was the editor of *L'Abeille*, Alcibiade de Blanc who was a Louisiana Supreme Court Justice, Mollie Moore Davis, who was a New Orleans novelist, and Adrien Rouquette, the bohemian poet-priest who lived with the Indians in Saint Tammany parish. She also corresponded with James Redpath who was a war correspondent during the Civil War as well as an abolitionist, writer, publisher, and the managing editor in 1886 of the *North American Review*, and with Sarah Bernhardt and Emile Zola. Anatole Victor Cousins, an older man who lived on a plantation outside of New Orleans often corresponded with Leona, and in their love affair of letters (1882-1889), he was fond of calling her “*Ma lionne*” (my lioness), an appellation she appeared to deserve and appreciate.

The portrait of Leona that I saw in the Cabildo museum I have learned since was painted in 1880 by John Genin (1830-1895), an artist who had studied in Paris under the guidance of portrait artist Leon Bonnat. In this portrait, he depicts Leona as a serious, simply clad young woman, standing next to her desk with her bookcase behind her. Mrs. Harold Queyrouze, who had personally known Leona, said that she was a petite woman,

about 5'4". From a newspaper clipping in the Queyrrouze papers entitled "Author Receives Copy from Japanese Publishing Company" Leona was "described in a New York magazine article as 'short, dark, very foreign-looking with an arm on which the flesh is hard as marble from her constant use of the fencing foils, big mystical eyes and a masculine mouth'" [UU-71 7:52]. In Edward Larocque Tinker's *Lafcadio Hearn's American Days*, he describes a bracelet that Leona wore, one that inspired an admirer—or perhaps her brother-- to immortalize in a poem. Tinker says that it was a "gold bangle of curious design . . . which her grandfather had given to her grandmother" (264). The significance of this bracelet is that it symbolized pride of her family as well as her lineage. The admirer wrote about her bracelet in January of 1890:

And thou quaint bracelet, Leona's fondest charm,
Ancestral relic of a glorious race,
Thou once encircled a royal Britton's arm;
And even now a nobler arm grace:
For thou when worn, Leona's wrist embrace.
And ne'er did'st thou on worthier arm shine-- J.S.M.
[UU-70 6:45].

Another admirer, Ella A. Giles, describes Leona in this way:

Leona Queyrrouze [is] the embodiment of literary and aesthetic culture and philosophic learning, yet unassuming and straightforward as a child Though surrounded by all the evidence of a highly conservative training, how frank and fearless her speeches, how resonant with feeling her deep and melodious voice, how unaffected and genial, yet perfectly independent and self-reliant in her manners. There is enough reserve to maintain dignity, enough seriousness to preserve womanly poise, but there is in her nature no dissimulation, no distrustful

“society unsmilingness [sic]” . . . [she] lives a secluded and retired life, but it is because she is a worker and not because she is a willing victim to inherited principles of aristocratic aloofness

[UU-71 7:52].

While these sketches are useful in re-constructing her life, I chose to speak to someone who knew Leona, so I contacted Mrs. Harold Queyrrouze (“Jerry”) who is the daughter in-law of Leona’s brother, Maxim, and I interviewed her and the surviving Queyrrouze family in their modest home in New Orleans the summer of 1996. Jerry related how Leona loved to wear lace dresses with high black boots and how she was fond of wearing a comb in her hair with a lace mantilla. The furnishings in her apartment were exquisite: There was a half table with a white marble top, and an 1840 Rosewood desk with intricate carving with a hidden drawer. A chandelier that she had made into an electric one lit the room, and her bed was a four-poster with a crown top.

Although Jerry had described Leona as very quiet and retiring, she was far from that in her youth. When she was young she had been very bold, vibrant and passionate about social causes. This passion for literature and concerns for social issues may have been one of the reasons that in January of 1887, she struck up a friendship with Lafcadio Hearn. Year later, he would earn worldwide fame as a translator of Japanese folktales into English, and he would be credited with having “anticipated the modern literary and cultural contact between the East and the West;” moreover, he would play “a vital role in the formation of modern cosmopolitan literature” (Yu 21).

At the time she met him, however, he was working as a local reporter, translator, and commentator on literature, including works by Théophile Gautier, Guy de Maupassant and Pierre Loti. With Leona’s assistance, and the help of her Martinique

servant, Marie, Hearn translated Creole folktales into English. Even though his time with Leona was brief, I will show that their friendship had a significant impact on her life and on her writing.

Lafcadio Hearn was a reporter in Cincinnati, but after having read some of the color sketches of the New Orleans area written by George Washington Cable, he packed his suitcase and took passage on a steamer down the Mississippi. When he first saw New Orleans, he was enchanted, but he was soon disillusioned when he found himself in poor health and in dire financial straits. He finally secured a job at the *Item*, translating excerpts from foreign presses and making social commentary on current events. Then he went to work for the *Times Democrat*. Jackson describes him as a very observant and insightful person, in spite of being blind in one eye and having only partial vision in the other. She relates that he “had been born on the Greek island of Santa Maura, the child of a runaway marriage between an English surgeon-major in the British army and a local Greek girl” (288). The marriage ended in divorce and Hearn’s mother went back to Greece. Soon after his mother abandoned Hearn, his father sent Hearn to live with his aunt in Wales. Jackson surmises that this was the reason that he became “moody, distrustful of even the most sincere of friends” (288). Hearn then moved to Europe and from there to New York, and then finally settled in Cincinnati. While there, he “married” a woman of color in an unofficial ceremony, but soon thereafter, he left for New Orleans. In a Hearn biography, *American Days*, Tinker relates that Hearn’s first work in New Orleans involved writing sketches about cooking, civic problems, and music-- anything that took his fancy. He also started work for the *Times –Democrat* in 1881 and “often translated the works of French or Spanish writers” into English (Jackson 289). In some of

his book reviews, he praised George Washington Cable, “Father Adrien Rouquette . . . Dr. Alfred Mercier . . . and Elizabeth Bisland” (289). Hearn met Bisland while they worked for the *Times-Democrat*, and they remained friends after she left to work at the *Cosmopolitan* Magazine in New York in the late 1880s. In 1906, Bisland published a two-volume biography of Hearn, which included letters to his friends while he was living in New Orleans and New York.

While in New Orleans, Hearn became very close friends with a young surgeon, Dr. Rudolph Matas, and Hearn later introduced Matas to Leona. When Hearn published his novel, *Chita* (1889), he dedicated it to Matas. Forty-three years later, when Leona wrote her memoir about her relationship with Hearn, she dedicated her book to Matas as well, in a gesture that honors her friendship with Matas, but more significantly, reveals her lingering literary and emotional debt to Hearn.

The immediate and close connection between Leona and Lafcadio was expressed through their correspondence, and their passion was obliquely channeled through their discussions of literature. While their association was brief, for Leona, at least, its intensity lingered for a lifetime, and because of this I have chosen to give attention to this facet of her life. This serves to inform her biography and to humanize her life work. While I will avoid biographical fallacies, I will not assume a disconnect between her poetry and Hearn—particularly involving those poems that were specifically addressed to him. In addition, some specific biographical detail is necessary to address some discrepancies in scholarship. Because of conflicting accounts as to the date of their meeting, I have used excerpts from several sources to corroborate my facts.

Some scholars have noted that Leona met Lafcadio when she was in her teens; however, she was twenty-six at the time of their first meeting. During my interview with the Queyrouze relatives, they related that Leona may have arranged a meeting with Hearn or was introduced to him. They said that she met him at a library on Royal Street and that he accompanied her home. In his biography of Hearn, Jonathon Cott asserts that Leona and Lafcadio met in January 1887 at “Fournier’s secondhand bookshop on Royal Street,” and he describes Leona as “a pretty young Creole woman with black hair and brown eyes” (201). After a brief conversation, Lafcadio escorted her home. Cott’s information was clearly based on Edward Larocque Tinker’s *Lafcadio Hearn’s American Days*. Tinker relates how Hearn met Leona in “Fournier’s old book shop on Royal Street”:

[A] young, pretty girl, unmistakably a Creole from her jet black hair and deep brown eyes, passed the shop and seeing him inside, hesitated, then entered. Going up to him she said: “I know you are Mr. Hearn, I recognized you from your picture in the *Times-Democrat* I want to ask your advice Hearn was captivated by her youth and enthusiasm and intrigued by the acumen of her cascade of questions--questions which she had been saving up for months in the hope of some such opportunity--so he was kindly and offered helpful advice They drifted out of the shop together, and Hearn only left her when they reached her door (262-263).

However, Junko Hagiwara states that they met at Garcin’s bookstore, noting that “Queyrouze knew that Hearn often stopped by this bookstore because she knew Garcin’s daughter” (3). While some scholars cite Leona’s age at the time of their meeting as fifteen, this might have been caused by some confusion between Leona and Elizabeth Bisland, who met Hearn at the *Times-Democrat* when she was fifteen or sixteen. By all

other accounts Leona met Hearn when she was twenty-six, in 1887, the year she returned from working in New York.

As in anyone's life, there are moments of clarity, which are remembered for a lifetime, and Leona's recollections of her meeting with Hearn reveal the significance she placed on this moment. In her memoir, *The Idyl* (1932), she recalls that "in the Latin heart of the old Creole town, in the well known second hand dealer's shop of books rare and antique, there it was that I first met Lafcadio Hearn, on a mellow spring-like day of January 1887, the last year of his stay in New Orleans" [UU-70 6:46]. While she admits that time had blurred many of her memories, she says that some were so clear that they could have happened yesterday. She vividly remembers their first meeting. This excerpt is from her original manuscript in the archive:

. . . as I walked in the shop, I heard Garcin's familiar voice: *Ah! Voici justament ma jeune amie*, Mademoiselle Leona Queyrouze, Monsieur Hearn. There was no further introduction; and it was surely as informal as he could have wished, in his dislike of conventionalities. His first words to me were: So you are one of the bees that come to the garden for flowers with the golden dust to make the divine honey and the tiny goblets of amber colored wax that hold it. I am afraid there shall be little left for me, I replied. But the garden is large and the flowers are plentiful [UU-70 6:46].

In several interviews, Leona describes their meeting in reverent detail, which further underscores the significance of the moment for her. Each time she describes the event she adds nuance:

I was a girl, romantic and poetic. I had just returned from New York where I had been working for the *Harper's Bazaar* and was then writing for *L'Abeille* and the old Picayune. He showed an interest in me from the beginning. He was not shy, but full of reserve and of observing powers [UU-71 7:52].

In another interview, the reporter summarized Leona's recollections and quoted some of her exact words:

[They met] on a Spring [like] day in January [sometime] in the 1880s, in a secondhand dealer's shop in the French Quarter. She saw Monsieur Jean Garcin, the proprietor, whom Hearn had called the "Vendor of Wisdom," roaming with lordly mien among his "Isle of books," and she saw him, the great Hearn, not then great, but young and striving, standing by the open volume of "*L'Origine de tous les Cultes*," a man sphinx-like, with "the introspective stare of a statue . . . the delicate features of his face, the thin sensitive nostrils."

Monsieur Garcin introduced them, and Hearn compared her to a bee that came to this garden of flowers, and she replied the garden was big enough for him also [UU-71 7:52].

In a different interview she described their meeting in this manner:

"I remember vividly, although I was a girl at the time, my meeting with Hearn I was in a bookstore flipping leaves of poetry volumes when I noticed the little shriveled man. He too was looking through books and holding the volumes close to his eyes, almost to his nose. We were introduced and from then on he became a visitor at my father's home at old No. 17 St. Louis street, calling frequently [UU-71 7:52].

By the time they met, Hearn had been in New Orleans for almost ten years as a reporter for *The Item* and the *Times-Democrat* and had become disillusioned by New Orleans society. Indeed, he had a reputation for writing rather unflattering characterizations of French Creoles in *The Item*; therefore, his friendship with Leona, a French Creole, was an unlikely alliance—perhaps for both of them. Regardless of their cultural differences, their relationship progressed rather quickly as if they both knew that their days together were numbered, sharing as Hearn described, "a few grains of sand."

In *The Idyl*, she remembered that the “first call was soon followed by another, and he became a frequent visitor” (6). Subsequently, there were a series of letters and personal visits over the next five months that caused some speculation and rumors. In the same manner as she had described their first meeting, Leona shared some of the details of their brief relationship. In a newspaper article dated June 29, 1932, she relates how Hearn came to see her while trying to avoid contact with other visitors at her home:

[Her] home on St. Louis Street was the meeting place for Gayarré, the two famous Dr. Merciers, General Beauregard . . . and other celebrities. Poor Hearn would come to see us and when he heard the chatter of visitors would turn away from the door, leaving the servant mystified or would stick a note for me in her hand and walk hurriedly off [“Reveals New Hearn” UU-71 7:52].

In *Lafcadio Hearn’s American Days*, Tinker explains the level of intimacy and privacy that they both shared. During their time together, Leona taught Hearn about Creole proverbs, and their passion was channeled obliquely through their discussions of literature:

Hearn found excuse[s] for coming back, and that the habit of calling was formed. She discovered that he left immediately if any one else came in. He explained this away by saying that he hated small talk, but she believed his sensitiveness had even more to do with it. So it came to be tacitly understood that on certain afternoons she was at home to him alone. They always sat on a sofa near the window in the large high-ceilinged drawing room with its handsome old furniture, where the light was good so he could read. Here they talked frankly and openly. . . . She helped him with his Creole proverbs . . . He often gave her invaluable literary advice (263-4).

Leona's description in *The Idyl* of her home, Hearn's visits there, and his friendship with her servant, Marie, will serve to enliven her biography with sensory detail:

The massive *porte cochère* or courtyard gate opened and as it closed slowly he walked through the spacious and shady, arched corridor or hall-way leading to the immense court-yard all flooded with sun, and in which grew a luxuriant and partially tropical garden between the great walls covered with creepers and vines of all kinds. There he paused beneath the lofty arch to take a long look and then was shown up the high stairs by Marie, our old Creole family servant who announced in low, soft tones: *Massie Lacadie*, but stopped short, unable to pronounce the rest of the name. English and Marie had never grown familiar. As we met in the parlor, more properly speaking, the library, he said: your strong old Spanish home and the sudden vision of the unsuspected garden, in fact sometimes in the atmosphere makes me think vaguely of the Alhambra [UU-70 6:46].

Well into her late seventies, Leona was still able to re-capture their time together. In an interview, she described the intensity of their discussions, which revealed an intellectual passion unimpeded by Hearn's request that Leona view him only as a "younger brother":

He came through the big *porte cochère*. He paused by the lofty arch. He went up the high stairs. They sat in a room with a huge book case, with statues of dragons and other monsters, with bacchantes and fauns. And they spoke of his poems again. Precious thoughts came from his mind like a golden metal. "I would like for you to look upon me as a younger brother," he said. They spoke of philosophy, of Hypatia. They became intellectual friends. He came again and again. He would say, "I come to claim a few grains of sand of your time." He gave her a copy of Herbert Spencer's "First Principles of Synthetic Philosophy." They talked of Heine's poems [UU-71 7:52].

Hagiwara believes that Hearn was “afraid of falling in love with her [which] can be observed in his first suggestion to her when he dared to say that he wanted her to consider him a brother” (2). In her poem, “*Le Regret*,” Leona may have been expressing the same fear tinged with regret. She describes two people who are reading together, and as they read about “love and songs of sorrow,” they realize their own passion even as they know that it can never be acknowledged. By the poem’s end she is left alone with only the busts of Scevola¹ and Diana for company.

Together, they lean towards a book.
Young are these two. The old copper lamp
With its open eyes, pierces the profound darkness
Making them sparkle and shine,
Two pupils under its tawny breath.
They read together in two soft accents
Of thriving love and songs of sorrow,
Of simple things that inspire misfortune,
And the crying voice of the soul.
As he reads again to the woman beside him
One wonders, are they friends or lovers?
The blood of their hearts beat, pressing.
Their blood is the same, their homeland the same
But do they live in each other’s eyes?
No, they are subject to the hand of Chance.
The future lies between them and their eyes
Will never meet, nor cross the impenetrable shadow.
Their hearts shall flee like waves on the sand,
Their happiness will bend like ocean seaweed
Unsettled by the waves; his bitter breast
Will Retreat, rolling far from the dunes.

¹ Scevola was the Roman soldier who failed to kill the Etruscan king who was blockading Rome. Upon his capture, he placed his offending left hand in a fire. So impressed was King Porsenna by Scevola’s courage that he ended his siege of Rome.

They turn to another page,
 But as he reads, his voice falters; there is a change
 In him as the flood fades.
 And with pure clarity the sky opens
 tearing open the horizon, showing the way
 Because they now know that their hands will never touch
 And their lips will remain silent
 For they will guard their inner secrets
 And scold their hearts despairing
 Even as the need to confess rises to overflowing.
 Such is the searing wound, like a hot liqueur,
 Before it rights itself, trembling for an instant
 Before falling without a voice
 Revealing nothing, and with silent eyes
 They lower their eyes again to the familiar words.

In the shadow of the chamber, now there is one
 Figure cast upon the wall, alone.
 Nearby, the bust of the wild and menacing Scevola
 Smiles at the chaste and fiery mouth
 of Diana, reveling under his bronze mask
 An obscure angle, put there by the sculptors' hand
 1885 (C.R.A.L. 227) [UU-70 6:47].
 (Appendix 267)

This poem suggests that Leona believed that there was much unspoken passion between them, and that even though their time together was spent on reading and discussion, for Leona, at least, there was much more than this. Her references to Diana and Scevola symbolize dedication to courageous passion, juxtaposed against Hearn's misplaced propriety. In the poem, "*Le Désir*," she describes the "kiss that never reaches the lips/ the whimsy of a butterfly attracted to a star," and then says that it is our "misfortune to live and to love/ where rising suns give birth to our lost tears" [UU-70 6:47].

While these poems indicate that Hearn affected Leona emotionally, they also show that he had a great effect on her writing. When they first met, he told her that he had seen one of her poems in the *L'Abeille* and that he had liked it. Encouraged, she asked if he would review her next poem, "A Legend of Mainz," if she left a copy at the bookstore for him to collect. He agreed, but when he responded the next week, he regretted to tell her that he found no value in the poem, and she discarded it. What can be gleaned from the letters between Hearn and Leona is that he discouraged her from writing poetry, saying that it was of such poor quality that she should not pursue a writing career. He said to her: "I hope you will be discouraged as much as possible because I have too sincere an admiration of your power in other directions to wish to see you attempt such valueless labor" (*Idyl* 8-11). Leona admitted that "the sting of his sarcasm was sharp and corrosive like that of the wasp, and the wound it inflicted smarted long and sorely," but also acknowledged that "he was gifted with a keen sense of humor" (*The Idyl* 6).

In another interview Leona described Hearn as "was usually a hard task-master. He would often read my poems and essays and say, 'That's not worth much, Leona,' and I would promptly throw them away" [UU-71 7:52]. In *The Idyl*, she says that often when she was ready to throw some her work in the fire, he would tell her to wait "until you have taken out some lines which may be used later, in some other writing." She "realized that it was as hard for him to please himself as for others to do so. His criticism of his own work was merciless until it was completed" (5). He did, however, encourage her prose and tried to interest her in reading one of his favorite writers, Herbert Spencer.

Significantly, Hearn offered Leona advice that if she had taken heed, might have changed the direction and outcome of her writing career. Noting her propensity to write

flowery and sentimental verse, Hearn advised her against her present course and pointed the way towards a new direction in writing—that of realism. Founded upon principles established in French literary circles, realism was taking hold in American literature, and it paved the way towards a new means of expression embraced by iconic American writers, such as Mark Twain, Sarah Orne Jewett, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Edith Wharton, Henry James, Jack London, and Stephen Crane. These, among others, defined and dominated the American literary landscape at the turn of the century. Leona’s failure to utilize the advice offered by Hearn resulted in self-defeating literary endeavors. Hearn critiqued her attempts at blank verse and encouraged her to find the true “art-spirit” of undistorted and unadorned depictions of real-life experiences. He tells her that only these “faithful pictures” will endure through time:

We are all apt, all of us, until something suddenly reveals our error to us, of rendering blank verse without a thought of its intrinsic value,--without any definite comprehension of its anatomy. It lives, and it delights: we do not think of asking why or how, any more than we think of trying to define the laws of grace revealed in the movements of a thoroughbred . . .

What is wanted, what will succeed, what will endure, are reflections of present existence, artistic and faithful records of what we hear, see, and feel through the impressions made upon us by those social forces of which we form integers. Realism . . . insures originality . . . no two lives are absolutely alike, no two minds alike, no two life-experiences alike, one who simply attempts to make a faithful picture of what is . . . without trying to ornament it or exaggerate it, or distort it, must become interesting if the true art-spirit is there (*Idyl* 8-11).

As history will show, it was her misfortune not to follow his suggestions about realism. While she did take note of his comments concerning blank verse, her resulting rhymed verse, which adhered to the aesthetics of the Romantic period, only exaggerated her distance from mainstream American poetry.

Unaware that she was disregarding valuable advice, Leona thanked Hearn for his criticism, and he responded by saying “Thank you for what I have never before received, -a kindly word in return for disagreeable criticism” (*Idyl* 18-19). Together, they began to work on their own projects, and during his visits he became acquainted with Leona’s “Martinique-born maid, Marie, who proved to be extremely useful” in helping him become familiar with the Creole dialect that influenced his novel *Chita* (Hagiwara 3). At the same time Leona was working on the Paul Morphy biographical sketch, “The First and Last Days of Paul Morphy” (that later would be used in Francis Parkinson Keyes’ novel *The Chess Players*). This intimate working association might have been opportunistic on Hearn’s part, for he has often been described by scholars as a “wandering dreamer, a rootless cosmopolite, a self-styled exile, a frightened escapist, a heartless lover, a shameless friend” (Yu ix). However, he affected Leona deeply, and in his biography of Hearn, Jonathon Cott states that when Hearn left New Orleans he left Leona broken-hearted. When I asked the Queyrrouze family if they were aware of any romantic involvement between Leona and Hearn, they could give no definite answer except to say that there had been “talk.” Apparently Hearn had earned himself a bit of a reputation because of his nightly excursions into disreputable parts of town accompanied by a friend who was notorious for getting into fights, and “rumors of his many indiscretions were brought to [Leona], but she did not believe them” (Tinker 265). All that the Queyrrouze family remembered hearing about their relationship was that Hearn had spent many evenings at supper with the Queyrrouzes and that Leona had assisted him in translating Creole folktales into English. They believed that her wealthy French

Catholic family would have never approved of a romantic association with a person of such meager means, especially someone who was not Catholic. Tinker cites other reasons:

At first Hearn attended the reunions of this group of older men who met at her father's house, but it is not surprising that this did not last long. Their tempers were too hair-triggered and his own peculiarities were too marked. When he began to write Creole proverbs and folklore a feeling arose that he was encroaching on a field that was theirs by right of inheritance (265).

During their brief association, Hearn avoided, if possible, any contact with the men of Leona's salon and only visited the Queyrouze home in the afternoons. Leona said that "he disliked making new acquaintances, and called when he thought there were less [sic] chances of meeting outsiders." Furthermore, he "shunned the crowded avenues to popularity, including literary clubs which he considered like centers of mutual admirations or as he once expressed it more forcibly: Praise Exchanges" (*Idyl* 5). But his personal visits to Leona ended, according to Tinker, after a quarrel. "Hearn had always told his friends that he would never marry an intellectual woman, whether this had anything to do with it is pure conjecture" (265). After their disagreement, he reportedly told her that he would never speak to her again, and she responded with a poem--perhaps aimed at Hearn-- in *L'Abeille* entitled "*Solitude*." Tinker summarizes this poem:

It is preceded by a Latin quotation, "*De Profundis Clamavi*" (from the deeps I call), and tells how she awaits him, counting each beat of the wing of seconds, asking whether he does not remember the agonized call for help forced from a suffering soul anxious for life "Nevertheless, you have not come, following your path, your eyes upon a book" (266).

They must have resolved their differences soon thereafter because Tinker notes that Hearn went with her to visit her father's plantation. Apparently there was an overgrown and vine-encroached garden behind the main house, which had such a sad appearance that Hearn wrote about it as though it was a garden where the witch-like Medea grew "strange herbs [. . . and made] potions and charms [in] her haunted and sinister garden" (267). Hearn remarked that Medea had lured a bee-keeper to her island in order to learn the secret of making honey, and that she seduced him instead—thus, it was her own fault that she never learned to make honey. Leona responded to Hearn in *L'Abeille* with the following verses (translated):

"Réponse" a L.H."

Medea, you have spoken the words of truth
and have taken your name, thus, woman of somber eyes
with a heart shy yet proud, filled with rebellion and shadow
And you hold the hand of a friend named: Treason!

Poets, make your honey, for she will make it poison
With curses and prayers without end
Calling from the heavens when hope grows dim,
And her screams will shake the walls of your turret.

She drinks deep the dew of the rose's trembling chalice;
Taking the rays of morning for her own
even as she sees in the night with cold clarity

the places of tombs that give rise to hate
where she will reap her harvest while humanity sleeps
and quietly claim her own like a moth in the night

May 27, 1887 *L'Abeille*
[UU-70 6:45]
(Appendix 270).

When Hearn read “*Response*” he wrote, “Medea is much too weird. Of course, she is but a shadow; yet, the shadow is so fantastic that one hesitates to look towards that which cast it” (*Idyl*). This response is significant because it serves as a glimpse into the character of their relationship. Their association appeared to be defined by Leona’s willingness to be both pupil and admirer, but when she strayed from that role, Hearn recoiled. Others were not so put off by the power that cast the “shadow.” One admirer, Bowman Matthews, wrote this response:

To Medea!

Salve! O Medea! Enchantress of the mystic eyes
Taught by Ancient Magicians the future to Devise
Whose piercing gaze discerns the secret springs of thought,
By occult science reads the lines that Fate has wrought.

Whence comes the power, O Seer, what potent spirit dwells
Within those orbs of darkness to work its wondrous spells?
Art thou the same Medea that to Jason gave the fleece,
When the Argo came to Colchis with the hero band of Greece?

A traitorous friend was Jason, but if I prove to be untrue
Take back the “poet’s honey,” the floral cup of dew!
Give me the draught of poison, and I will drink to you!

[UU-70 6:45]

Hearn, however, seemed to be retreating from more than just Leona’s words, and as it turned out, she was the last the last friendship he made in New Orleans. Not long afterwards he departed for Martinique, and Leona described his departure in *The Idyl*, making reference to the last grains of sand that had escaped the hour glass of their time together:

Grain after grain the sands have been running, carrying along the hours, days and weeks, and June was at hand already, leading in the long and languid summer months. He had accomplished his task of love, *Chita*. In one of his last visits he told me that he was making final arrangements to leave New Orleans; and he handed me a large envelope saying: this is not intended for the family album. It is to remind Medea sometimes of Aristeus, the honey maker. It was his photograph with the inscription To Miss Leona Queyrouze—with sincere wishes of her friend.—Lafcadio Hearn,--June 1, 1887 (11).

On his last visit to her, once again, Hearn offered her advice on her writing. Leona wrote down his parting words “as soon as he had left the house, to preserve the accuracy of the meaning” (11). He urged her to look beyond the physical world into the depth of her psyche to find meaning and significance in her work and advised her against looking only at earthly beauty for inspiration:

[Do not] seek inspiration merely around you in the exterior world and its powerful vibrations which fill our senses with the ecstasy of beauty. It is in the psychical depth of our own Self that we must look to find treasure which Aladdin’s lamp never could have revealed (*Idyl* 12).

One has to wonder what would have happened if the tenure of their relationship had been extended to the point where Leona would have taken his advice, for he was inviting her to join the realists who expressed their insight in terms of everyday experience; however, this question presumes that longevity would have granted influence and does not consider Leona’s significant exposure to literary circles in New York. In any event, when they parted ways, they were taking different directions in their literary careers, one leading to recognition and the other obscurity. Hearn departed to find new inspiration on new soil, and his farewell to Leona was both wistful and poignant, much in the romantic style favored by Leona:

If we don't meet again on this little planet, which is possible but not probable, we surely will later in some other cosmic station, before we reach Nirvana, the great Terminal. Could we not make an appointment and try to remember it?

(*Idyl* 12).

A short time after Hearn left he wrote to his friend, Matas, on July 1, 1887: "I am not skeptical now, but I do not know what to do, I fear to write to her. All fire and nerves and scintillation; a tropical being in mind and physique,--I could never be to her what I should like to be" (Nishizaki 90-91), and apparently his fear overcame his impulse. Regardless of the speculation as to whether this was truly a love affair, Hearn's impact on Leona was deep and long lasting. Matas, who was a close friend to both Lafcadio and Leona "treated Queyrouze's romantic involvement with Hearn as a given" (Hagiwara 2), and when Leona was questioned in an interview about her relationship with Hearn, she responded in this way:

[She] smiled when asked if Hearn were in love with her and said in her quick French accent: "That is hard to say. There was perhaps some romantic attachment. But Hearn was not a man to speak of love. He had a wandering mind then and couldn't fit into a conventional marriage" [UU-71 7:52].

After Hearn's departure, he spent two years writing travel sketches in the Windward Islands of British Guiana, in St. Pierre, and on the island of Martinique. From there, he went to New York to review the final proofs of his novel *Chita*. In 1890 he left for Japan, never to return (Bisland 98).

While Hearn was in New York in 1889, Leona may have been there at approximately the same time--but this is only speculation. Leona spent a year there in

1886 and once again in 1888-9 to translate French and Creole plays into English for the American stage at the request of Mary Booth, the editor of *Harpers Bazar*. Booth had become acquainted with Leona during the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition in 1884. Records indicate that Leona traveled to New York several times. Whether she saw Hearn there in 1889, however, is impossible to determine. There are some indications that this may have occurred. In the Hearn biography, Bisland includes numerous letters, and several in particular that Hearn wrote during this time. One is written to an anonymous man: it reads in part:

To_____

1889

. . . I have been shivering here, and have got to get South somewhere soon,--if only till I can get back to the tropics. I am sorry to confess it, but the tropical Circe bewitches me again—I must go back to her (469).

Others letters are written to an anonymous woman:

--there are no more mysteries,--except what are called hearts, those points at which individualities rarely touch each other, only to feel a sudden thrill of surprise as at meeting a ghost, and then to wonder in vain, for the rest of life, what lies out of soul-sight I have been so afraid of never seeing you again

To_____

March 7-8, 1890

. . . . I shall be very sorry not to see you again
I might say love you,--as we love those who are dead—(the dead who still shape lives);--but . . . I cannot say. . . .
. . . . --Forgive all my horrid way, my dear, sweet, ghostly sister.

Good-bye,

Lafcadio Hearn
(Bisland 470-475).

Whether or not these letters were written to Leona is uncertain; indeed, this raises the question as to why they were in Bisland's possession and not in Leona's. Perhaps they were meant for Bisland, but this does not explain Bisland's reasons for leaving the salutations in the letters blank when she included them in the Hearn biography. Regardless of speculation, there remains an interesting correlation between Hearn's request for Leona to view him as a "brother," and his reference in the farewell letter to his "ghostly sister."

Hearn left New York and finally settled in Japan where he quickly assimilated. By 1895, he already had a wife and child and had begun the task of translating Japanese folktales into English, a life work that won him admiration and widespread fame. As for Leona, she returned to New Orleans having found the pace and the people of New York too fast for her. She also realized that her translation work for the New York stage was not a feasible project "because of the incompatibility of New York and New Orleans cultural and theatrical interests" (Hagiwara 2). The Queyrouze family told me that Leona left New York, quite simply, because it was not a French town. Since only twenty years had passed since the end of the Civil War there was still residual animosity, and Leona retreated to the security of her traditional and parochial culture.

When Leona returned to New Orleans she seemed a changed person. No one can say for sure what brought about this change; perhaps it was a final farewell to an unrequited love or the repudiation of American mainstream literary culture in New York. Whatever the reason, there was a distinct difference in her writing from that point forward, almost as if her psyche had been split in two—between the public philanthropic activities as evidenced by her articles and essays, and the private self as revealed in her

poetry. As I shall demonstrate in Chapter Six, her rhetoric articulates the stages of grief as it vacillates between anger and resigned endurance at her perception of the usurpation of her culture by those she called “Anglo Saxons.” Her work is elegiac, and her verses are filled with loss and longing, not only for the loss of her culture, but for the loss of love. One such example of this can be found in a poem Leona published seven years after Hearn’s departure entitled “*Fantôme D’Occident: A Lafcadio Hearn Au Japon:*” She likens Hearn to a moon and says that once the moon is hidden, the stars can reveal themselves. However, these stars—like pupils-- cast their lights on the water much like Ophelia, who falls into insanity and despair after having been ignored and cast away during Hamlet’s obsessive pursuits (much like Hearn’s). This ultimately leads to her drowning—a theme that is pervasive in Leona’s oeuvre.

The golden Chrysanthemum now blossoms
unrestrained under the vast night skies
In a place of mystery, and in a strange embrace
The growing slender threads catch the light.

The ghost of the moon appears without a sound
Pretending to hide its face with its hands.
--a distant phantom, with a vague complaint
All at once it disappears, fainting away.

It comes from a country where the pure and blond Night
Can never entirely escape the bonds that tie,
Of azure blooms and white magnolias.
The moon gives birth to the trembling stars
Each one a tearful pupil, where like the shadow of Ophelia
In a deep river, they cast their veils

(*L’Abeille* December 23, 1894)
[UU-71 7:52]
(Appendix 250).

Likewise, in the poem, "*Le Désir*," she says that it is our "misfortune to live and to love/ where rising suns give birth to our lost tears" (C.R.A.L. March 1885/ Appendix 249). These two poems in combination with "*Le Regret*," and "*Solitude*," indicate the depth of her feelings for Hearn and explain the sense of reverence she feels for him even years later when she was asked by the Hokuseido Press in Tokyo to submit *The Idyl* (1932) for publication. This clearly indicates that there must have been some significant connection between the two of them for Leona to have held onto the few brief letters Hearn had sent to her, the ones that are included in *The Idyl*. This romanticized remembrance of Hearn written before her death still holds the hallmarks of young love. When she was finished with her manuscript, she entrusted it to a friend, and in one of life's odd twists of fate, "the man who brought her manuscript to Hokuseido in Japan was John Garcin, whose father had owned the New Orleans bookstore where Hearn and Queyrouze first met" (Hagiwara 4).

Her attachment to Hearn also raises the question as to whether her marriage in 1901 was one of convenience. Other than the "Bonds of Matrimony" document witnessing their marriage at St. Mary's Church in New Orleans dated December 26, 1901, there are no letters or keepsakes in connection with a widower Pierre Marie Etienne Barel whom she married when she was forty-one. The only items in the Queyrouze papers are of a legal nature, such as his will and ownership of property, succession papers, transfers and lists of real estate, tax receipts, and the final accounting of the assets of his first marriage to Marie Jeanne Juilliat. When I asked the Queyrouze family about Pierre, they told me, simply, that he was a family friend who lived in the neighborhood. There is only

one poem written just a few weeks before her marriage that may provide some indication of her relationship with Pierre. The poem speaks of two people who are joined in melancholy rather than joy. There is a sense of resignation and a call for peace and harmony. Note that the setting of the poem is similar to that in "*Le Regret*," but it lacks that same emotional intensity:

"Nocturne"

We come together at this old table in our ennui
Before the hands of ice pass over us.
Yes, a tangled golden glow of light envelops us
And serenity comes to us in this place.

Come, review this book with me. It is the one
That will ease our confusion. Here is the place.
We choose not to believe that our lives are passing, but the trace
Of our tears and the echo of our laughter tells us so.

No, our stirring should be in harmony
Attuned on a lute with radiant chords
As our spirits become an offering to the Divine Breath.

Just as my hand turns these sheets of poetry
So, too, shall we be joined in the end,
I, you, as it has always been, in infinite sweetness

[UU-71 7:54]

(Appendix 261).

Perhaps her decision to marry was also based on the loss of a family circle that had long supported her. Many of the men in her salon had been like fathers to her, and they all passed away in the mid 1890s: General P.G.T. T. Beauregard and Placide Canonge died in 1893; Alfred Mercier in 1894, and her father, Leon, and Charles Gayarré

died in 1895. Even after further research and the final edit of her upcoming biography, these questions might remain unanswered, but what is known for certain is that Leona seemed to slide into a private retrograde towards the close of the century. Wrapping herself in sentimentality instead of looking forward, she turned to her poetry and looked to the French Romantics for her inspiration, concentrating on the themes of death and loss. Whether this has any biographical associations is perhaps less important than the fact that her backward inclining is something that she shared with many of her French Creole contemporaries who constructed a mythical cultural past, imagining it to be a time when benevolent chivalrous plantation owners enjoyed an agrarian aristocracy.

In public Leona remained socially active and involved, associating with many members of local organizations who held tightly to their disappearing culture. One such group was The French Society of the Fourteenth of July, which was founded in 1890, and presided over by Mr. Romain Senac. They opened a French school for boys at 724 Dumaine Street in the French Quarter, a school which was the “product of the labor and patriotism of the members.” They chose Leona as the director of the school. Senac declared that it would be a “patriotic institution inspired by the love of France” and cited the purpose as the “propagation of the beloved French language and keep it from being absorbed by the prevailing language of commerce [“French School: Formal Opening” May 20, 1895. UU-71 7:53].

In addition, this society-- and many like it-- attempted to stem the rising flood of Anglo-Saxonism by the creation of the Creole myth, which shall be discussed in Chapter Two. This cultural bunkering sealed their fate, for as the stream of America moved forward, the Creoles retreated into the backwater where they stagnated, preferring to

romanticize an imagined past, a fate that Leona shared. In many cases their cultural blindness had an element of obstinacy that bordered on fanatic zeal, and many, such as Charles Gayarré, his friend, Alexander Dimitry, and Placide Canonge went to their deaths with this carefully nurtured vision. In another ironic twist of fate, Leona, who shared their narrow vision, gradually began to lose her sight. As she advanced in years, she lost most of her vision and spent her time as a recluse writing manuscripts with the help of a companion and her brother Maxim.

Towards the end of her life Leona was still vital, as Jerry remembers her, but rather quiet. She was almost blind, often kept to herself, and was fearful of strangers. Jerry recalls that Maxim was very protective of Leona, and that she made no decisions without him. Other than taking walks with Maxim, she remained at home. Leona did not have a phone, for she preferred the grace and continuity of letters, and she never quite mastered the typewriter even though her friends had urged her to do so before she went entirely blind. In an interview she shared the writing technique she employed late in life to compensate for her blindness and inability to concentrate for long periods of time:

I jotted down notes on bits of paper, on calendars, grocery bills, or on the back of letters. I stuck them in my mirror or pinned them on a string stretched across my room. All were numbered finally and put in a box. When my young friend who lives with me got ready to type them for me into a book we sorted them out [UU-71 7:52].

Leona could not even read the final draft of *The Idyl* when it was sent to her from Japan. The Queyrouze family told me that until her death in January 1938 due to congestive heart failure, Leona had a personal maid and one of her duties was to make

sure that Leona's long full skirts did not brush against the small ornate iron coal burner stove that was situated in the middle of the room. Thus, long into the twentieth century, Leona remained a woman out of time and out of place, holding on to the vestiges of a fashion and a culture that had disappeared long ago. She had failed to follow the literary path that Hearn had urged her to follow, and in doing so, sealed her fate of obscurity. Her life story serves as a relic of a vanished culture, and one that inhabits and gives meaning to the concept of a lost cultural moment.

CHAPTER TWO: “WHO ARE THE CREOLES?”

Among the great federation of States whose Anglo-Saxon life and inspiration swallows up all alien immigration, there is one in which a Latin civilization, sinewy, valiant, cultured, rich, and proud, holding out against extinction

--George W. Cable *The Creoles of Louisiana* (1).

When the historical lens widens, it provides a frame to view not only individual identity, but cultural identity as well, and in this case, grants a perspective on the denotation and connotation of the term *Creole*. Leona Queyrouze was born a French Creole in a time when Louisiana was being transformed, not only by the Civil War and the subsequent Reconstruction, but by the changing demographics of her region. Long before she was born, the fabric of her French Creole culture was unraveling, beginning with the influx of Americans that began following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803, and continuing with the flood of immigrants into the area mid-century. In effect, she became an immigrant in her own city, New Orleans, and this sense of displacement permeates her literary work. Throughout her essays and poems, there is a sense of loss and an obligation to document the people and place of a quickly disappearing culture. Some historians trace the origin of the demise of the French Creoles to the beginning of the nineteenth century when the promise of rich soil for farming lured many Americans into the newly acquired territory that included Louisiana. Rosan Augusta Jordan and Frank de Caro assert that the “challenge to French ethnic hegemony had begun . . . virtually with the coming of *les américains* after 1803, the resulting ethnic strife of the 1820s, and the waves of Irish and German immigrants who flooded New Orleans between 1830 and 1860” (41). Other

historians also point to the French Creole attitude of complacency and lack of industrious entrepreneurship as a factor in the ultimate demise, which is described by George Washington Cable in *The Creoles of Louisiana* (1884). These and many other factors contributed to the French Creole's cultural downfall, and Leona was born into a time when this submergence was almost complete.

Placing Queyrouze's work into historical context can add nuance to our understanding of the history of the region during the aftermath of the Civil War in southern Louisiana and can provide an intimate glimpse into the life a French Creole in the closing years of the culture. In her, we can find one of the voices of the "Silent South," those individuals of complexity and insight who do not fall nearly within the parameters of political, cultural and ethnic delineation. Such is the case with Leona Queyrouze who is at once an American woman writer, a French poet, a composer, a French Creole, and a Southerner. She is all of these-- and none. Her life and work defy boundaries and encourage us to look past our preconceived notions of literary and cultural framework and to hear a voice that speaks at the close of the century and at the end of her cultural place in the New World. While some scholars are quick to point out the flaws in the economic and social construction of the French Creole culture, this kind of argument is insupportable if it rests solely on the logical basis that a culture, which is inherently flawed, represents each individual within that culture, and if it implies that an imperfect society is one that should be dismantled. If that is the case, then all societies and all cultures fall within these parameters. I argue that a worthier discussion should involve one which investigates the resistance to a dominant culture. As such, the work of Leona Queyrouze serves to chronicle this experience, and her poetry, short stories, essays,

music, and articles represent a voice aware of its demise, trying to rise from the ashes of the South and the French Creole culture, an endeavor that ultimately fails. Many stories are written of successes, but failures have their lessons, too. Perhaps through the telescopic lens of history, her failures can lead us to successfully learn more about what is lost and what is gained when ethnic markers are lost in the flood of mainstream culture.

Before we can fully address the twilight of her culture, we must first understand what it means to be a *Creole*. Werner Sollors in *Creole Echoes* describes the difficulty of this attempt for the term is “often the subject of debates, adopted or rejected by countless authoritative-sounding commentators.” He cites Johann Friedrich Blumenbach who believes that the slaves who came to America from Ethiopia first used the term in the 1700s. Sollors includes Balzac’s definition of Creoles as mixed races from “Europe, the tropics and the Indies” (xviii). He adds that Mme Reybaud thought the term had to do with one’s complexion and that Whitman reveled in the exotic confusion of dark European and African skin tones. Others, such as Mayne Reid, denied that there was any mixed blood. Still others, like Wilhelm von Humboldt referred to Creoles simply as “Americans,” or more simply yet, as Gary B. Mills says in the *Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, that a Creole is ““anyone who says he is one”” (Sollors “Forward” xviii).

Understandably, these viewpoints point to a persistent confusion regarding the term, and in order to sort through this, I will focus first on the genesis of the term and then turn to the contributions made by George Washington Cable and Charles Etienne Arthur Gayarré who had a determinant hand in the connotation of this term. Granted, Cable had more influence because his work was more widely read, but I will address equally each man’s contribution to demonstrate the polarity of the debate. By the end of

the nineteenth century, the term *Creole* was used to describe an exotic culture that was introduced to the world stage by Cable, but it was also defined by the perpetuation of the Creole myth fostered by Charles Gayarré.

Cable begins *The Creoles of Louisiana*, with the question, “Who are the Creoles?” and likewise I will attempt to answer that question starting with the historical use of the word and then describing the conflict surrounding it as the cultural demographics began to shift after the Louisiana Purchase. In *Creole New Orleans*, Joseph Tregle describes the historical misconceptions about the use of the word *Creole*. Some claim that the Spanish conquistadors used the term to specify the children of white Europeans born in the New World, and when Louisiana became a Spanish territory, the term “criollo” was used there. In the 1600s and 1700s the term *Creole* meant simply “native-born” (136), and prior to Spanish control, Louisiana people also used the term in this way. Supposedly, it was the Spanish who considered “Louisiana slaves as *criollos*” (137), but there is still debate surrounding this account. The origin of the word is also described in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*:

“Creole” refers to people, culture, to food, music, and to language. Originally from the Portuguese *crioulo*, the word for a slave brought up in the owner’s household, which in turn probably derived from the Latin *creare* (create), it became *criollo* in Spanish and *créole* in French (Thernstrom 237).

While there is some debate and speculation over the origin of the word, what is known for certain is that when Louisiana became an American possession, the French Creoles found themselves belonging to a nation of English customs and language. In order to differentiate themselves from the Americans, they began to strengthen their

cultural identity and to take measures to solidify the fluid term, *Creole*. The *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* describes this process of identification:

Louisianans of French and Spanish descent began referring to themselves as Creoles following the Louisiana Purchase (1803) in order to distinguish themselves from the Anglo-American who started to move into Louisiana at this time. The indigenous whites adopted the term, insisting, most unhistorically, that it applied exclusively to them. The life of this dying group is depicted in George Washington Cable's *Old Creole Days* (1879) and in some of the works of Lafcadio Hearn (Thernstrom 237).

After the Louisiana Purchase, the non-indigenous people who had lived longest in the region felt that they had greater claim to the land, so they were quick to use the term *Creole* because they had been born in the New World and wanted to preserve their investment in the land. At this point, they did not associate the term with color or distinguish between white and black, perhaps because “color never enjoyed power to mandate the language or habits of white men in prewar years” (Tregle 139). From the beginning, the use of the term in the New World revolved around the assertion of culture and the pursuit of power.

This complex term has occupied the discourse of contemporary scholars because its use touches on so many aspects of the region—its history, politics, and diversity. Their responses demonstrate that the term is still highly contentious. Sybil Kein says that “Creole has come to mean the language and the folk culture that was native to the southern part of Louisiana where African, French, and Spanish influence was most deeply rooted historically and culturally” (Kein xv). Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson says that the “native white Louisianan will tell you that a Creole is a white man, whose ancestors contain some French or Spanish blood [or . . .] a Creole is a native of the lower parishes

of Louisiana, in whose veins some traces of Spanish, West Indian or French blood runs”

(8). Historian James H. Dormon offers this definition:

The precise definition of the term “Creole” has been the source of unending controversy in Louisiana studies. My own working definition holds the realities of historical usage, i.e. “Creole” meant simply “native to Louisiana” during the period between circa 1720 and the outbreak of the Civil War. As such, blacks (both slave and free) as well as free persons of color and indeed white Europeans were all designated “Creoles” if they were born in Louisiana, or if they descended from those were born there (616).

The definition offered by Dorman, however, changed long before the Civil War, and it began its transformation during the influx of other cultures in the region after the Louisiana Purchase, most conspicuously, Americans from the northeastern United States. At first, when the Americans freely called the locals *Creole*, whether black or white, the white French Creoles would correct them as a matter of courtesy. At first the French and Americans lived together on equal terms according to an account by Alexis de Tocqueville in *Journey to America*. ““The French and Americans may criticize each other mutually . . . but at the bottom there is no real enmity”” (Hirsch and Logsdon 7). However, when the French Creoles began to lose their foothold in the area during the mid 1800s--both economically and politically--the Creoles began to feel threatened by the Americanization of their city and retreated into the bastion of their parochial society.

In *Creole New Orleans*, Hirsch and Logsdon state that the influx of Americans into New Orleans was a driving force behind the formation of the Creole identity and the Creoles often magnified their identity as a buttress against the invading American cultures. They derided the Americans and called themselves “cultural aristocrats” and the

Americans “uncouth backwoodsmen” (91), but as in all polarities, there is some truth and much fiction. At first, the Creoles felt no threat, “no risk that such definitional partnership might diminish their social status or prerogative of the dominant class” (Tregle 139).

When they began to feel the sting of associations, however, they used the term *ancienne population* to separate themselves from the Americans, blacks, and the foreign French, but the term did not have a long life, probably because it was equally confusing. Their intent was to show that they were the descendents of the “casket girls,” (perhaps legendary) who came from prominent French families who sent their daughters to the New World with all of their belongings in a trunk (casket) to wed successful Frenchmen in New Orleans. Creoles felt this background gave them the prestige of land and of pure bloodlines because they were not of mixed blood, nor were they newcomers like the Americans and the newly arrived French. Paul F. LaChance further distinguishes the French Creoles from the “Foreign French” who were not as wealthy as their Creole counterparts, but who were better educated.

When the Americans began settling in the area, they used the term *Creole* indiscriminately, because they did not understand its importance to the locals who were “engaged in struggle for the very soul of the community” (141). The dividing line between the Americans and Creoles was Canal Street because it separated the downtown area, which was predominantly French Creole, and Uptown, which was American. Each had separate city councils and municipal courts, and each used a different language in their businesses and schools between 1836 and 1852 (Hirsch and Logsdon 93). This separation was not discouraged by the Creoles who disassociated themselves from the Americans for reasons of pride and insecurity. One can imagine the position they were

in—they were confronted with the aggressive, entrepreneurial and industrious Americans who showed early signs of mercantile and industrial success, and they saw their very own French market place and government buildings being taken over by the English language. They saw their own resources dwindling and their social circles thinning.

Even so, some Creoles still believed that the two cultures could co-exist, but all of this changed when “Americans accused some of their Creole rivals of having mixed ancestry” (Hirsch and Logsdon 98). This “new usage of the word *Creole* emerged during the Reconstruction era when the struggle for white supremacy brought about a fundamental and lasting rapprochement between all white conservatives, regardless of their antebellum ancestry” (98). Even though they had struggled against the Americanization of their city, the Creoles soon abandoned their resistance, if not their disdain, for American culture, and aligned themselves with the Americans. Quick to hold on to the only power they had left—their whiteness-- the Creoles actually hastened their demise by trying to associate themselves with white Americans. In doing so, many abandoned their own cultural history.

Upon the advent of the Civil War, Creoles were further threatened by the inference that they were a people of a mixed blood, and as a reaction, they sought to separate themselves socially and semantically. In the pre-Civil war era New Orleans’ social division had been along ethnic lines: “Latin versus Anglo-Saxon, native born against foreigner . . . Color had played no role in the confrontation [perhaps because] only white men [were] political persons.” French Creoles had “unchallengeable white supremacy” which had “made it possible to accommodate pan-racial Creolism. The Civil

War changed all that” (Tregle 172). At the knife-point of the Civil War, the term *Creole* split into two halves along the color line.

In the *Strange Career of Jim Crow*, C. Vann Woodward describes the pre-war social system in New Orleans as a tripartite structure consisting of whites, free persons of color, and slaves. Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson explains that most ethnic groups intermingled freely in the crowded neighborhoods of the Crescent city. Many children were born of these associations. Joan M. Martin notes that the “sexual relations among European settlers, African slaves, and native Americans during the period of French rule in Louisiana (1718-1768) resulted in the creation of a third race of people neither white nor black and neither slave nor completely free” (Kein 57). This occurred largely because of a miscegenation arrangement called *Plaçage* where quadroons would enter into long-standing relationships with white men from Europe. *Plaçages* were left-handed marriages, or *mariages de la main gauche*. These arrangements “created a third race of people in Louisiana . . . a separatist self-focusing community” (Kein 69). It also created a “class of free people of color which was well-educated, cultured, wealthy, and powerful” (69). Joy Jackson describes this group, as “half-white, half-Negro”:

who were the descendants of free person of color who referred to themselves as colored Creoles. They were, as a whole, a prosperous, educated, French oriented petit bourgeois faction of local society. From antebellum times they had been a close-knit group, holding themselves aloof from the darker-skinned slaves. Most were business and professional men, but some were poets and writers; some, musicians who studied European music in France (277).

The *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* also defines this culture as one based on a Caribbean social structure:

In the United States in the 20th century, *Creole* most often refers to the Louisiana Creoles of color. Ranging in appearance from mulattos to northern European whites, the Creoles of color constitute a Caribbean phenomenon in the United States. The product of miscegenation in a seigniorial society, they achieved elite status in Louisiana, and in the early 19th century some were slaveholders. Many, educated in France, were patrons of the opera and of literary societies. . . . Louisiana Creoles of color thus constitute a self-conscious group, who are perceived in their locale as different and separate. They live in New Orleans and in a number of other bayou towns. Historically they have been endogamous, and until late in the 19th century spoke mostly French Their ethnicity is exceedingly difficult to maintain outside the New Orleans area. Over time, a great many have passed into white groups in other parts of the country, and others have become integrated as blacks. This latter choice is not based wholly on appearance, for many Creoles who choose to identify as Afro-American are white in appearance (Thernstrom 237).

This unique social system survived in New Orleans largely because the city was a “continental city, most picturesque, most un-American, and as varied as the streets of Cairo. Here one would see French, Spanish, English, Bohemians, Negroes, mulattos” (Jackson 20). There were many “free colored” in New Orleans; in fact, Julia Street was named after Julia, a free woman of color (26) who owned the land. People of all races attended the theater, and the French opera house was the first place in the country where “grand opera was heard” (27) by a diversity of people. It was a “veritable sandwich of races” (27). The Creoles of color sent their children to France to study; they opened schools and owned businesses. The ethnic lines were so blurred; in fact, that it was “difficult to enforce laws against a race when you cannot find that race” (29).

Even though New Orleans was the site of slave auctions, most slaves who lived within the city worked as domestic servants. With some notable exceptions (described in Chapter Five), many were treated with more respect than those who worked on plantations. The hardships agricultural slaves endured and the horrors they experienced were well known among the slave community. In fact, the threat of being “sent down the Mississippi” was often used to frighten slaves into submission. According to the Slavery Code of 1724, slaveholders treated slaves as movable property. Slaves couldn’t carry weapons, assemble, or buy or sell property. They had no property of their own and could not receive gifts from whites. They could not hold office or be served by the legal system or give testimony. First time runaways were branded; the second time they were hamstrung; the third time they were killed. After the Civil War, the Slavery Code was replaced by the Black Code during a wave of “anti- black fanaticism.” The Creoles, afraid that their racial purity would be questioned in this new regime or that they “might be confused with blacks” (Tregle173), joined forces with other whites in order to retain their dominance in the social hierarchy.

Whereas once the danger confronting them had been humiliating loss of Gallic identity to a devouring Anglo-Saxon homogenization, now it was the infinitely more horrible possibility of being consigned to debased status in the “inferior” race, identified as half-brother to the black, as sort of mixed breed stripped of blood pride as well as of any claim to social or political preferment (173).

So strong were their fears of association by blood that, even today, one can still detect a defensive sensitivity among some French Creoles. Virginia

Domínguez investigates the “long history of slavery in the United States and of white ownership of African slaves has left in Louisiana” and notes the prevailing “traditional association of white with upper status and of blacks with lower status.” She points out that “white Creoles today” recoil from “the mere suggestion of possible African ancestry” because it “invokes a lowering of social and economic status” (63). Thus, she argues, “to identify someone as Creole is to invoke in the course of a particular conversation historically linked connotations of social and economic status . . . of how things used to be and how in their opinion they ought to be.” Often, this is used as “the major criterion by which individuals are identified as Creole” (63). This becomes a vital distinction in southern Louisiana, where “often, if not always” this becomes “the crucial variable that individual New Orleanians manipulate in making themselves members of a group, or in identifying other as member of a group. Status, then, is frequently more of a determining factor on group membership than genealogical ancestry” (263).

This hypersensitivity about ethnicity still lingers into the 21st century—where the term has continued to evolve. Until recently, as Tregle points out, individuals who belonged to a “mixed race” used the term *Creole* as an adjective or used the term *Creole of color*; the “noun *Creole*” had only for been used for white (133). In the twenty-first century, this has changed once again, for one will find the term used by people in Louisiana in a variety of ways. Thus, the fluidity of the term *Creole* persists, and its definition remains dependent on regional, local, and personal interpretations.

In spite of the vagaries of the term, one individual was instrumental in influencing the perceptions of the connotations of this social marker. George Washington Cable was responsible, in large part, for introducing the Creole culture to the national stage. He enjoyed immense popularity, and with his friend Mark Twain, he toured the country giving lectures. They were part of the Local Color movement that followed the Civil War. After his service in the war, Cable returned to New Orleans, his birthplace, and began working as an accountant. He also worked for the New Orleans newspaper the *Picayune*. After being discovered by Edward King, the editor for *Scribner's Magazine*, Cable began the serial publication of *Old Creole Days* (1879), a collection of short stories, and *The Grandissimes* (1880), a novel describing the lives of the Grandissime brothers, one white and the other of mixed blood. In these novels, he provided a glimpse into an exotic world that was largely unknown to the rest of the country.

These works served to fuel the debate concerning Cable's sympathy and/or antipathy towards the Creoles. On the one hand, he seems to romanticize their lives, describing their soft patois infused with the flavor of the West Indies, and the alabaster skin and rich silks and lace of the women and the dashing good looks of the men. On the other hand, one of the main characters of the *Grandissimes*, Joseph Frowenfeld offers an indictment against the injustices of the caste system and *plaçage* practices in place during the time the novel is set (1804). With vivid detail Cable describes the world of the *Vieux Carré*, where historical figures walked along the same streets as their fictional counterparts; he juxtaposes the straightforward industrious Yankee with the hedonistic and indolent Creole.

Lafcadio Hearn praised Cable's work, hailing it as the "most remarkable work of fiction ever created in the South" (Tregle 174); however, the French Language newspaper in New Orleans, *L' Abeille*, was harshly critical of Cable, even going so far as to attack Cable's personal ethics and character. Dr. Alfred Mercier, who was the founder of the *Athénée*, a member of the Queyrouze salon, and a personal friend of Leona's admitted that Cable "appraised Creole life dismally" (Tregle 176). The Creole lifestyle was exposed for its worst atrocities. These characters were a "searing representation committed to a dead past, long ago abandoned by enlightened and progressive communities of the world . . . its hallmarks are indolence, ignorance, cruelty, superstitions and hypocrisy" (Tregle 175). Cable continued his exposé with his 1884 *The Creoles of Louisiana* and in his 1885 essay "Freedman's Case in Equity."

Not only did Cable's work bring negative attention to the Creoles, the Creoles also believed that Cable had transformed their culture into an exotic curiosity. Visitors to New Orleans in the 1880s often looked for the characters that Cable described in *Grandissimes* and *Old Creole Days*. One local complained, "Northern people come here to New Orleans to study us as curiosities . . . trying to identify the localities and types of persons" (Jackson 14). The Creoles felt Cable added insult to injury when he used the word "*Creole* to mean native born—including white, Negro, and those of mixed ancestry." They were incensed, and "in order to redress the grievances which they felt Cable had inflicted upon them, numerous Creole writers and their sympathizers attacked his interpretation of their background and culture" (Jackson 14-15).

In "Creoles and Americans," Tregle describes how Cable was vilified by the white French Creoles because of the perceived betrayal of their culture. Beginning with his first

character sketch of 1873 of “Sieur George,” which described gambling addictions, Cable experienced a “veritable flood of abuse and damnation . . . In newspapers, pamphlets and public meetings” (131). But it was less about Cable than his timing, because at the time he was publishing, there was a “radical transformation of long-established ethnic and racial conventions in the New Orleans community” (132).

[This was] challenging emerging new concepts of identity and producing confusion in altered relationships which in many ways continues to confound our understanding . . . [resulting] in fear and resentments [which] drove Creole passions to formations of hardened orthodoxy . . . a veritable mythology” . . . at their very core stand the explication of *Creole* itself, rigid, absolute, and closed to any gradation of meaning, it holds that the word can never be used except to designate a native Louisianan of pure white blood descended from those French and Spanish pioneers who came directly from Europe to colonize the New World. Thus, even Acadians, or Cajuns, are rigorously excluded . . . in the specific insistence that no black or person of mixed blood can or ever could have been correctly termed a *Creole*, no matter his parentage, place of birth, language or cultural orientation (Tregle 132-133).

When the Americans began to settle in the newly acquired region after the Louisiana Purchase, the white French Creoles felt the necessity to affirm their separate identity and the impulse served to foster the creation of the Creole myth. The Creoles characterized themselves as aristocrats by virtue of “empyrean ascendancy” (Tregle 135) and looked upon the Americans as commoners. They considered the Yankees to be cold because they were not able to enjoy the simple pleasures of life such as music and dance. On the other hand, a Creole was someone who had “gracious intellectualism, spontaneous and fecund spirit, subtle, delicate and penetrating refinement, and an exquisite suavity, delicious perfume and particular cachet” (136). A Creole New World

aristocrat devoted his time to “theater and opera . . . thoroughbred horses, dueling, foils and the pleasures of dining and gaming tables.” The women were “paragons of gentility, style, grace, cameos of beauty and flirtatious charm” (136). In many ways, Leona Queyrouze and her brother, Maxim, aspired to represent and to uphold this ideal, even into the twentieth century.

As an essential ingredient to the formation of the Creole myth, the Creoles would never admit that the purity of their race had ever been commingled with Africans and the best way to do this was to deny the entire history of *plaçage* and miscegenation. Anthony G. Barthelemy explains that “threatened as they were by the *tarbush*, white Creoles who had previously found sexual alliances with non-whites inconsequential now discovered that their prerogatives literally denigrated them and their families” (Kein 262). Rushing to protect their identity, the attempted to “cover their tracks, to deny their consanguinity with their Creole brethren on the other side of the color line” (262). In order to accomplish this, they created the fantasy of racial “purity.” Barthelemy states that “this disavowal and hypocrisy reflected white Creole’s most primeval fear, that they would be made to share inferior status and debasement with those of their own blood whom they themselves so condemned” (Kein 263). Many sought protection under the law, and “the provisions that existed in Louisiana law to limit a child’s right to knowledge of paternal descent” became crucially important. These laws had been “originally designed for economic reasons,” but became “more important in protecting white Creoles from the stigma of knowing their colored brothers, sister and collateral relatives (Kein 263).

Jackson describes how many prominent Creoles (many of whom were members of the Queyrouze salon) were adamant in their declaration of racial purity.

The poet-priest Adrien Rouquette and the local French paper *L'Abeille* led this offensive. For them, “Creole” meant a white person of native French and Spanish stock. Unfortunately, the “myth of the Creole,” which grew to full maturity as a result of this controversy, pictured the original Creoles as polished aristocrats, free from human faults as greed and money-grubbing, a portrait, which was far wide of the mark. Genteel literature on Creole life [that depicts this] “golden age” [is found] in the works of Grace King and Kate Chopin, as the result of this romanticizing of the Creoles in the last twenty years of the century (15).

Long before the Civil War, the Creoles had lost their hold on the region—the Civil War was merely the felling blow. In spite of myth building, their world belonged to the past. By 1860, Tregle says that “the Creoles had clearly lost” even as the “first generation born after the purchase came into maturity, young men such as the historian Charles Gayarré, the playwright-editor-impresario Placide Canonge, the linguist Alexander Dimitry, the physician Armand Mercier and the priest-poet Adrien Rouquette” (Tregle 156). These men hoped for “*La Renaissance Louisianaise*,” and they were instrumental in engendering and fostering the romantic Creole myth. They championed the ideas of white supremacy, and attacked and demonized George Washington Cable who they regarded as “the aggressive agitator for the rights of Negroes” (Woodward *Strange Career* 38). The Creoles felt that in losing the war, they had lost doubly. Their “hopes for political and cultural dominance had vanished in the relentless demographic Americanization of the city” (Tregle 173). So the Creoles retreated into a fiction, imagining themselves to be proud aristocrats who had suffered at the hands of the Yankee hordes and had been stripped of wealth and prestige. They saw themselves as

tragic and valiant figures in the myth of their own making, recalling the old days when they had ruled over the domain of sugar and cotton with the just and gentle hand of a superior race, treating happy and content slaves like kindly father-figures and gentle guides. Situating themselves in the fictitious world of Sir Walter Scott, the Creoles erected a mythical Creole nobleman, a noble and kingly demigod who revered the sacred purity of the gentle women folk; he was a man of unquestionable honor finding in fiction an “amelioration in the reassurances of an imagined past” (174).

As part of this fiction, the 1875 *Jewell’s Crescent City Illustrated* defines the *Creole* as irrevocably white. In an 1885 public address at Tulane University, Gayarré painstakingly and thoroughly described the etymology of the term *Creole* asserting that it could only mean those of pure white blood. He also changed the term to include an adjective to describe those who were descendants of the “aristocratic” and “chivalrous” lineage of Creole stock” (Tregle 180). What Gayarré did not relate at this time was the “he had himself fathered a child in 1825 by a free woman of color” as revealed by his biographer Edward M. Socola. Tregle claims that Gayarré’s obsession with the purity of the blood lines was born “more of racial fears than of ethnic pride . . . [and] so met the emotional needs of a distraught society” (181). His audience listened to his long and rhetorically overblown speech “The Creoles of History and the Creoles of Romance” and presumably decided to believe every word.

Illustrious members of Creole society hoped for *La Renaissance Louisianaise*. This group consisted of the Creole cultural elite, including Placide Canonge, Cyprien and Numa Dufour, Charles Deléry, Victor Debouchel, Charles Gayarré and Henri Vignaud, many of whom were members of the Queyrouze salon. They refused to see that the

economic system, which had supported their lifestyle, was based on human injustice. An example of their obtuseness can be seen in an 1866 article in the *Daily Crescent* that declared that the “institution of domestic servitude” had been “wrongfully denominated ‘African slavery’” (Tregle 165). In many ways they were trying to escape the reality of their situation and to deny responsibility, but ultimately they could never escape their past or deny what Tregle describes as a “haunted heart--” forever haunted by the past. He shows them to be part of a “society grounded in the abomination of racial arrogance and social injustice . . . ignorance, moral insensitivity and cultural impoverishment” (178). For many, the mirror that was held up to them by the progressive ideologies of the Union was not one they wished to endorse. In their blind complacency they had refused to see the signs of change so clearly outlined in Cable’s 1884 *Creoles of Louisiana*. In Cable’s other novels and character sketches, he exposed aspects of their culture that were difficult to balance with the Creole assumptions of identity as the refined aristocrat. To that end, they attempted to “shoot the messenger” and turned their backs on social progressivism. In their refusal to become a part of the future, they condemned themselves to the past. Only the myth survived them.

The Creole myth became “so universally accepted as truth that they found ratification even in the pages of otherwise competent professional historians” (Tregle 182). Tregle gives proof of the French Creoles success in transforming their myth into historical fact by citing the 1915 the Louisiana State Court of Appeals ruling. The court stipulated that ““when a person is called a Creole this evidences an absence of any Negro blood”” (183). The Louisiana Historical society affirmed the accuracy of the definition put forth by Gayarré , and in 1922, a New Orleans newspaper article gave his definition

of Creoles: “Here in Louisiana a ‘Creole’ has never been anything but a descendant of the original French and Spanish settlers born in Louisiana instead of France or Spain.” The same article states that if the term is used in reference to black people, it is most probably an anachronism of slave trades, and therefore was not applicable.

In the end, one must ask: Who won the claim to history? Cable or Gayarré? If one were to ask people on the street what the term *Creole* means they most likely will say that it describes a person of mixed blood—according to Cable’s definition. However, if one were to ask that same question in southern Louisiana, the answer might be very different indeed—perhaps it would describe the French, the Acadians or Cajuns, or Creoles of Color. The macaronic path of this term implies that it is as fluid and complex as the people it describes—a people of synthesis—of language, ethnicity, culture, and politics—indeed a *mosaïque*.

Leona’s worldview, however, had a much narrower focus, and she attempted to write into existence an idealized white French Creole culture and to preserve its claim to history. For her the demise of her culture was also the loss of a dream, and she did not blame the Creoles for this; instead, she blamed the Americans. In her unpublished work in French entitled “*Silhouettes Créoles*,” Queyrouze describes her culture and the ways in which it was being transformed by Americanization. In this (translated) sketch, she speaks to “those who did not know the New Orleans of an earlier time,” those who have not “known how to speak the strange Creole language.” She says that it was similar to the West Indies French, but this original language is dying in the face of Dickens and Tourgueneff.”¹ She bemoans that fact that “because of slavery, there has arisen barbaric

¹ Ivan Tourgueneff (1818-1883), Russian Writer

prejudice against the character traits of the former Louisianans, the ones who at last have disappeared.” She attacks the Americans, saying:

other tyrannies no less flagrant and with abuses no less grave have succeeded here in masses, those who are the descendents of the victorious North, those with a feudal past. So well have they succeeded, that there are those of us who believe that we will not survive the transformation, so firmly entrenched are they now, that they can now declare “for a long time now, this has been our country!”

She states that “the period of the old Creoles are gone forever, and hard on its ruins rises another creed: the one of money,” and she makes the charge that the “money of the old American republic is a tyrant more inexorable than that of a despotic crown, for the empire is absolute, more than . . . the divine rights of crown or throne.” Those who are victorious, she says, only succeed in putting down others. The words of “Danton”¹ remain true through the centuries. In truth, the revolutions are done to put down those on top, only to make those who were at the bottom rise to the top.” She criticizes the Americans and uses the words of Charles Gayarré, defending the term *aristocracy* as it is applied to her culture. Granted, “there did exist an aristocracy in Louisiana. But how some apply the term now is ridiculously false . . . our society was essentially plebian and democratic.” She argues that “the true type of Creole was a chivalrous Frenchman” but this has changed because of the “absorption of the Creole race into the Anglo Saxon element, notably those from the east”:

The shape of the face lengthens . . . and sharpens . . . and loses its softness; the eyes become more piercing and have a metallic light in them, and the voice changes as well; one generally had a deep and vibrating tone of the Creole, then it rises . . . into an American voice, becoming sharp and strangely pointed. At last the soft

¹ George Jacques Danton (1759-94), lawyer, and leader in French Revolution—later charged with a conspiracy to overthrow the government and was sent to the guillotine

French language can now only be remembered . . . now it has the rhythm of the English language, or to be more exact, American.

Her words can be viewed as a reaction against the principle of manifest destiny espoused by Anglo-Americans, and in her final indictment, she describes the effect this ideological mandate has upon marginalized cultures. She charges that “the irresistible force of assimilation takes over rapidly with resistance—opposition; the tides rises to submerge us, the current drowns us” [UU-70 6:47].

In this excerpt, Leona uses the theme of drowning, and this continues in her poem, “*Imprecatio*.” She speaks of the “fading flower of our Creole race” that had once been a “proud race.” She blames this on the “other nation” that has exiled her culture into oblivion, submerging it completely:

[It] Crushes under their heels the generations
Of the French and the Latin, and the grand Spanish
And all those who knew the same passion
To love, to seek vengeance, to hate, to forgive
.....
Cut off and exiled, we are ushered to the
Large rolling river where its heavy waves take us under
Taking all, carrying all, into the tomb of the abyss
[UU-71 7:55].
(Appendix 255).

In a poem written to Leona, an admirer shares her sense of loss and refers to a bracelet that Leona wears as a symbol of a proud heritage. He refers to Leona as a “lost princess of a wasted line:”

Thy band, Leona, like old Rome’s proud halls,
Whose polished columns, yield not to decay;

Their classic heads, served the vulgar Galls,
Themselves, their masters, even in our day,
Though Plantagenets, Tudors, and Capulets all have passed away

II

And thou quaint bracelet, Leona's fondest charm,
Ancestral relic of a glorious race,
Thou once encircled a royal Briton's arm;
And even now a nobler arm grace:
For thou when worn, Leona's wrists embrace.
And ne'er did'st thou on worthier arm shine,
Than hers, lost princess of a wasted line

--J.S.M.

January 1890 [UU-70 6:45].

These are just a few examples of the voices of a culture struggling against its demise, and they serve to demonstrate that the French Creoles' duration as a hegemonic culture was as brief as it was passionate. As M. Lynn Weiss says in *Creole Echoes*, "this dynamic society that began the nineteenth century as a cast-off French possession By the century's end, saw the demise of a viable Francophone community" ("Introduction" xxxiii). One of the roles that Leona assumed as she began her writing career was to speak for her white French Creole culture, with the hopes that the power of her pen could serve as a buttress against the flood of change. She was attempting to salvage her island of aristocratic, chivalrous, and intellectual French culture—a mythological and idealized version of a culture that existed only within the lines of poetry. In her elitist and classist worldview, she did not acknowledge that the changes in her beloved *Vieux Carré* was not a fall from grace, for the old Quarter had always been a mixture of cultures, and many could lay claim to the term *Creole*. Even as she was unable or unwilling to relinquish her dream of an idealized culture, she simultaneously

questioned its existence in “*Agonie*” *C’était une reve, hélas un reve tour cela!* (It was a dream, alas! A dream all! (Appendix 237). In spite of her misgivings, she devoted her writing career to the reconstruction and preservation of a time and a place, never truly acknowledging that she was chronicling the casualties of dreams. Even so, her purpose in writing does not mitigate the need for the study of a marginalized body of work, which can “contribute to a more complex understanding of the origins of American literature and culture” (Weiss xxxiii), and Chapter Three will investigate the unique culture of these people and this region, a place that was “arguably the most multicultural of places in North America,” one that offered “considerable gifts to American literature” (Weiss xxxvi). This largesse can prove beneficial only if we are able to acknowledge these gifts, and take responsibility for them—for regardless of culture and class, we share a national past, and we must, in turn, acknowledge that without the voices of the marginalized our national discourse is diminished by their absence.

CHAPTER THREE: *VIEUX CARRÉ*

Indeed, hospitality is a salient characteristic of the inhabitants of Louisiana, and is inherent in them. They do not consider it as a duty or a virtue The Creoles of Louisiana owe their impulsive generosity and that kindness verging even on imprudence, greatly to their direct descent from the Latin races, whose blood courses through their veins
--“The Creoles” Leona Queyrouze

As the historical lens widens its perspective even further, we can see how dependent the Creoles were upon the cosmopolitan nature of the city of New Orleans. In many ways their environment and their identity were inseparable—their subsistence depended upon the other in a dialectic system of self-reflexive definition. Only when this nineteenth century city is revived in our modern imagination can we grasp what it meant to be both *Creole* and an inhabitant of the *Vieux Carré*. To that end, this chapter will attempt to once again breathe life into the Quarter, with the sounds and sights of the streets, including details that will serve as descriptive detail for the Queyrouze biography. Leona’s world was essentially French, in customs, art, architecture and cuisine, but more importantly, she believed that the continued existence of her culture depended upon the survival of the French language and literature.

Most citizens in New Orleans were Catholic and most spoke French, but by 1855, the use of the French language began to be overtaken by English, which was used in the major newspapers, in most market transactions, in the government, and in the theatre. By 1860, the French dominance in the region began to subside. The free population in New Orleans was “99,071, of whom 48,601 or 40 percent, were foreign-born” in 1860. (Tregle

164). The Creoles began to become fearful of the newcomers because many of them came to Louisiana to pursue agricultural and mercantile opportunities. The Creoles perceived this influx as a threat to the established Creole culture. Many, including Charles Gayarré, were vocal in their dismay over the changes that were occurring in their region, and Gayarré became the spokesperson for the sentiments of many of the Creoles. They became fearful that their carefully nurtured culture would be eroded by the influx of other cultures and languages, so they started their own publication in 1861 under the guidance of Emile Hiriart. It was called *La Renaissance Louisianaise: Organe des Populations Franc-Américaines du Sud*, and it was supported by the following members:

Placide Canonge, Cyprien and Numa Dufour, Charles Deléry, Victor Debouchel, Charles Gayarré, Henri Vignaud, and Dominique Rouquette. It was committed passionately to a double goal, absolute victory of the Southern Confederacy and creation . . . [of a] community whose heart, mind, and spirit was irrevocably French (Tregle 168).

Many of these people were individuals who would mentor Leona in later years as she joined them in the Queyrouze salon. However, dramatic changes were about to occur that no written document or adherence to French customs could prevent. No matter their allegiances or loyalties, their carefully constructed world collapsed the same year that Leona was born—1861.

The city was occupied by Union forces for fourteen years beginning with the fall to Farragut in April 1862 and ending when the Union troops left in 1876. Louisiana had the longest Reconstruction period of any state, and the effect of this was deep and long lasting, but the decline of the Creole culture was also caused by the changes in language,

education, commerce, and government. By 1868 elementary schools could no longer teach in French. All legal documents had to be in English. In a periodical *Le Carillon*, Creoles tried to hold on to their language and their culture, declaring that French was “the language of civilization which will serve forever to vanquish German Mysticism and Anglo-Saxon materialism” (Tregle 170). In “*Silhouettes Créoles*” Leona criticizes the Americans for their subservience to another creed—“the one of money . . . a tyrant more inexorable than a despotic crown.” Emily Toth articulates the Creoles’ sentiments regarding the Americans when she summarizes Kate Chopin’s view of a certain “type” of French Creole:

The angry, unregenerate Frenchman . . . loathed everything “American.” In New Orleans, that meant virtually everyone who spoke English and lived outside the French Quarter, where the old Creoles had hunkered down, grumbling about bad times and rude upstarts (63).

The tension between the two factions was further exacerbated when Creoles were subjected to counterattacks by American writers who questioned the purity of the Creole blood and claimed that Creoles were actually descendants of “Moors and slaves brought into Gaul by Roman legions” (Tregle 170). So vitriolic were some of the editorial exchanges that two editors actually challenged each other in a duel. The Creoles now found little humor in the Yankee’s ignorance about the term *Creole*.

Americans thought that the Creoles were still too connected to France and that their loyalties to family excluded them from joining into the progressivism of the Yankees. To some extent, the Creole demise was their own fault—for they were so “behind in education and political experience” that they could not “assure their continued

hegemony” (Tregle 151). This is easy to determine in hindsight, but at the time, the cultural decline of the French Creoles was not readily visible, even to outsiders. For instance when Lafcadio Hearn saw New Orleans for the first time in 1877 from the ship, he was enthralled by what he saw:

. . . I first viewed New Orleans from the deck of the great steamboat that had carried me from the gray northwestern mists into the tepid, orange-scented air of the South . . . my impression of the city [was that it was] drowsing under the violet and gold of a November morning Even before I had left the steamboat my imagination had already flown beyond the wilderness of the cotton-bales, the sierra-shaped roofs of the sugar sheds, the massive fronts of refineries and store-houses (Hutson 6).

However, to Hearn’s discerning eye, he could see hints of the decay. In a letter to a friend Hearn wrote:

When I first saw it first—sunrise over Louisiana—tears sprang to my eyes. It was like young death—a dead bride crowned with orange flowers—a dead face that asked for a kiss. I cannot say how fair and rich and beautiful this dead South is (Hutson 6).

In many ways Hearn was seeing beyond the carefully constructed world that the Creoles has created, a world that was quickly disappearing, for they failed to acknowledge the surge of change that was poised to engulf them. Instead, the wealthy French Creole citizens of New Orleans occupied their time enjoying cultural entertainment: Theirs was a world of opera and theatre, balls, dancing, and soirees. Today, it is hard for us to image how insulated they were, for mass communication and

technology have connected and homogenized our culture, but for the nineteenth-century Creoles, their Francophone culture was carefully nurtured by French newspapers, books, conferences, foreign education, and theatre, thus enabling them to ignore the burgeoning culture that was overtaking their city. They were isolated in the French bastion of “Frenchtown” or *Vieux Carré* --what we now call the French Quarter. On the other side of Canal Street the American contingent flourished.

To accurately perceive this consciously created world, one must look closely at the lives they constructed for themselves, and the Queyrouze family provides an intimate glimpse. When I interviewed the family, they recalled visits to the Bayou home of Maxim (Leona’s younger brother) who was a respected attorney in New Orleans. They said that entering his home was like stepping into another world, a world filled with the art, furniture, and the elegant trappings of French culture. Such was Leona’s world. In order to get a true sense of her surroundings, one can look for descriptions written during her lifetime. A newspaper article entitled “Miss Queyrouze: a Distinguished Lady of the Crescent City” describes her home as one with “Spanish architecture with thick walls, domed gates, flagged yard that leads to a winding stairs which gives entrance to a parlor that might be called more properly a museum of rare art and historic lore.” In the parlor, there are portraits over which hung “Generals’ jeweled swords, the gifts of grateful monarchs, medals, letters and commissions. The rarest of art gems are inscribed: ‘From your friend, Napoleon Bonaparte.’” Leona’s favorite place to sit was on the “chair on which Napoleon sat in council of war, and she claimed that the “only entire set of furniture which was the property of Marie Antoinette that ever crossed the Atlantic Ocean” was her parlor set.” Each piece in the set was “covered with the royal coat of

arms and stamped with the initials of the manufacturer. The silk was woven for each piece of furniture . . . was mellowed by time to a softer hue of crimson and purple”¹ [UU-71 7:52].

Another newspaper article written by Ella A. Giles on March 3, 1889 quotes an admirer of Leona who described Leona’s home:

[In] a curious old house in New Orleans [Leona] had a salon that seemed a quaint survival of the eighteenth century. It was furnished with the regency furniture brought from France by her ancestors, who came to Louisiana in the days of the profligate monarch [UU-71 7:52].

Leona, as well as many other French Creoles, constructed an environment that served to isolate them from the rest of New Orleans society. Hidden from the streets, through arched pathways, were their Caribbean inspired courtyards, filled with tropical plants and fountains. In many ways, this further insulated the Creoles from the cosmopolitan diversity that filled the streets past their gates. Their enclosed society matched the physical world within which they ensconced themselves, and Leona captured this self-reflected environment in her descriptions of the typical homes in the *Vieux Carré*, many of whom were similar to her own. In her unpublished French manuscript, “*Silhouettes Créoles*,” she makes strong connections between her culture and the

¹ A photograph of Miss Queyrouze at her writing desk can be found at the LSU Hill Memorial Library special exhibits “Creoles.”

architecture of the Quarter, saying that “the French and the Spanish still haunt here; their rich breath still moves through these thick walls.” Describing the history and form of the structures, she says that “these simple buildings were built principally under the Spanish regime.” Because her extensive descriptions serve to illuminate more than architecture, and define her social parochialism as well, I have included a translated excerpt in its entirety:

The walls lean against one another, and the arcade has a wide façade with a series of regular festoons. The balconies have iron railings, rising above the first floor. The archways hide the inner courtyard and shade the houses during the warm heat of the day. Ridged cords line the high ceilings of vast rooms on the ground floor. A heavy door with ornate carvings and a door knocker closes against the street noises and opens into an immense corridor paved with stones and bricks; overhead there is a big arch with a simple seal of an old cloister etched into the stone. The shade offers a fresh respite in the warm days, but can be cold in winter. This corridor, like a long hall, is separated from the courtyard by a range of arches that open to the first floor, the only place to enter the apartments. Between the corridor and the courtyard, there is usually an iron gate that is always closed so one can safely leave the door unlocked to let in the breeze during the unending, intense and implacable heat of the day. Through this gate, one can see a courtyard with high and impassable walls, at the base of which are several plants and climbing vines; the tenacious vines climb the walls covering it like a cloth of green; the glycine foliage climbs the damp green walls, and the diaphanous clusters of lilac perfumes the air, inclining towards the ground, losing its leaves in curls. The honeysuckle and the bamboo, similar to the Alphonse Karr¹, tramples other more fragile vines, twisting together their numerous arms, mixing their perfume and hues. In this courtyard there are arbors and trees. Now and then, the starry fine leaves of the tropical plants with their thin blades tremble in the slightest breeze with a dry clicking sound and cast shadows on the white stones in the penetrating heat. From the bottom corner of the long courtyard, the walls rise up to the top of the cupola, with its green pointed top that catches rain water that falls into an enclosure decorated with wide iron circles The severe and implacable façade of these abodes exudes a physical calm, but if one were to pass during the day, one might hear bright noises, all at once, clear and radiant, coming from the places that these walls shelter. Over the balcony, past the opened Persian

¹ a plant with the same name as Jean Baptiste Alphonse Karr (1808-1890, the French novelist, critic and floriculturist.

blinds, one clearly could hear the laughs, songs, and sounds more joyous than the mere study of the piano [UU-70 3:37].

The “implacable facade” she describes separates her society from the burgeoning mix of cultures outside her gated courtyard, and her choice of words suggests that she viewed her culture as one of refinement and exclusivity. In an article reprinted from *The Home Journal* of New York found among the Queyrouze papers dated Sunday March 3, 1889, entitled “Leona Queyrouze,” Ella A. Giles alludes to this connection between the society and structure when she describes the “tightly closed buildings” and the “relics and antiquities of Frenchtown.” In her article, she describes the exotic hidden world of the salon and observes that “there are certain typical Southern and foreign-blooded women in New Orleans of whom it is almost impossible to make satisfactory pen-portraits as it is to mirror the peculiar scenes among which they move”:

Leona Queyrouze is such a woman. She lives on St. Louis street one of the ancient homes whose heavy doors and high walls on all sides defy the scrutiny of the passer-by [. . . There is] no hint . . . of the beauty lodged in the interior of the paint -worn and time-stained building. Upon being admitted to the dingy, darksome place, and stepping upon the damp and slippery gray stone floor [below] these sepulchral entrances [and] hearing the sound of singing birds and falling waters, [one] suddenly step[s] upon a golden beam which the sun sends shimmering down . . . In the near distance are trim flower beds lining the stone wall and jars of brightly blooming plants and rose-vines reaching up to the ivied galleries. The living apartments are not on the ground floor, but up in the air, where more birds are chirping and singing and more vines are climbing and thrusting their tendrils through every crack and cranny, and where, leaning from the gallery, stands another dusky figure like unto the one that swung open the ponderous door at the pealing of the gong, and who speaks in pure Spanish as she escorts the guest on further through mysterious passages . . . through richly carved doors . . . [to rooms] lofty and spacious . . . filled with mammoth mirrors and rare pictures, elegant rugs and once-gorgeous tapestry [UU-71 7:52].

Connecting the physical salon to the cultural one, Giles offers a sketch of the people who often visited the Queyrouze home:

[In] the ancient drawing room . . . on Wednesday evenings gray-haired judges, learned physicians and ancient painters [visited] . . . Later frequenters [. . . were] Lafcadio Hearn, Mollie Moore Davis and others of established fame in the gifted coterie of New Orleans writers . . . There is a chess-board and a whole game of Paul Morphy, used when he was only ten years old, and on which his father and grandfather played, one of the most prized relics [UU-71 7:52].

Giles then turns her attention to the physical details, all of which are representative of the French culture that this salon nurtured and preserved:

The parlor [is . . .] furnished in the “Directoire” or Bonaparte style . . . The tables came from the reign of Louis the Fourteenth and are direct family heirlooms. Here is a fine old chair in which Napoleon used to sit; there upon the wall is one of Napoleon’s autograph letters framed in old oak and to which is attached a decorated medal given by him to Leon Queyrouze . . . Here is an antiquated bronze clock . . . here is a wonderful profile of Napoleon the First when he was consul . . . A unique little bookcase holds -----beautifully embellished volumes and a skull . . . [In] the family apartments [there is . . .] a bronze bust of Scevola, who ‘burnt his hand not to betray his county. . . [In] the parlor used daily, which is an immense one, there is an abundance of statuary . . . antique and modern objects of art and vertu. There are busts of Byron, Hadyn, Mendelssohn, Gluck, Rousseau, and Voltaire. There are on the walls masques of Augustus and Venus. On a handsome mantel stands a lovely Venus looking over her shoulder as if eyeing the fine bust of Plato

Giles concludes that in this place she senses a “hazy consciousness of concealed treasures and dimly felt occult influences”:

Even the quaint door-knobs and the queer collection of bric-a-brac suggest profound secrets . . . Everything seems to have designs upon the imagination. One becomes dreamy and speculative in such an atmosphere. Why is the head of the “Dying Gladiator” decorated with swords, flags, drinking cups and pistols? Why is the Bust of Soule, the French lawyer, placed between Diana and Venus? [UU-71 7:52].

To answer Giles question, I suggest that Leona perceived her station as one of reason and argument (Soule) situated between love and war (Venus and Diana). These classical figures featured prominently in Leona’s poetry where one will find references to Diana and Scevola, and the setting of two of her poems, “*L’Regret* and “*Nocturne*” is in this parlor. When Giles notices lying on a shelf “an incongruous Puchinello dangling its limbs and grinning from a corner where it has been suspended by a bright green string [. . . bearing] the Creole inscription *Pantin tire, Pantin pas Tire* (As you pull the proper string creatures move),” she asks her about it, and Leona admits, “Yes, I put it here. Punchinello means much to me. He is, after all, my favorite in this bizarre room.” This unapologetic recognition suggests a self-conscious quality about the choices she has made in constructing her environment, one in which she has “pulled the proper strings” to create her world.

Both Giles’ and Leona’s descriptions of the French Creole home conjure ethereal and mystical images, so very different from the practical ideology and architecture of late nineteenth century America. When Leona speaks of the bronze bust of Scevola, “who ‘burnt his hand not to betray his county,’” she acknowledges that she “placed him near the door way to guard like a sentinel the Napoleonic parlor from the influence of the mixed period.” By her own admission, she reveals that she is consciously attempting to separate herself from the American culture that was taking over her city. Indeed, her

parlor is a relic of the past and a fortress of French culture as once described by her admirer as an “ancestral relic of a glorious race.”

When I questioned the family about the fate of the belongings described in this article, they told me that much had been lost during the war. They related that Leona’s brother, Maxim, had stored his living room furniture with friends but that they never returned the items; additionally, there had been a theft at one of the homes as well: A thief entered through the basement window on the house on DeSoto Street and stole several things. However, some of items that Giles had described can be found at the Louisiana State Museum. Giles mentioned that “there are on the walls masques of Augustus and Venus. On a handsome mantel stands a lovely Venus looking over her shoulder as if eyeing the fine bust of Plato.” In a letter dated September 26, 1922, the museum curator, Robert Glenk wrote to Leona while she was living at 1465 North Robertson Street in New Orleans. In the letter, Glenk acknowledges the gifts to the museum, which were the following:

A bronzed mask of Diana, one of Venus, and one of the Dying Gladiator” [and the loan of] “one large portrait of yourself—an oil by J. Genin, one large water color (pastel) likeness of yourself by Rivoire, a large bronzed bust of Mesmer, two large bronzed plaster busts—one of Beethoven and one of Schiller, with their supports to hang against the wall, and one granite head of an idol dating from the Stone Age in Egypt (Access No. 8247 & 48) [UU-69 4:28].

The family had no knowledge of the whereabouts of the remaining items; perhaps these things were sold along the way. Even today, the remnants of many gilded possessions can be found in the antique shops along Royal Street. Try as she might to

resist, Leona's world was changing: Canal Street, which had separated the Creoles from the Americans, symbolically, became the city center. Outside her cloistered walls, New Orleans was a city of bustling activities and commerce that was quickly becoming the "mixed period" that Leona feared--the infiltration of Anglo culture. To read her profile of the Quarter, one could get the erroneous impression that her world was predominantly white French Creole, hardly the case in a city that included a 30% population of people of color. Beyond her carefully preserved bastion of French culture was the thriving cosmopolitan city of New Orleans whose architecture bespoke of different sensibilities and directions.

Late nineteenth century New Orleans is described by Marie Adrien Persac (1823-1873), whose work is profiled by John H. Lawrence in *The Historic New Orleans Collections Quarterly*. Persac was a Louisiana artist who painstakingly documented in his drawings and gouaches (opaque watercolor) the architecture of the city. He was known as "a chronicler of the antebellum plantation scene and the post-Civil War commercial architecture of New Orleans" (2). Lawrence describes the drawings "of the two sides of Canal Street in New Orleans stretching for the Mississippi to present-day Basin street offer[ing] a view of post-Civil War New Orleans that showed a city undamaged by war and ready for business" (2). In the same publication, John Magill in "Persac's Canal Street" describes Persac as an artist who brought "the 19th century street to life with its ironwork galleries and balconies, mule-drawn streetcars, stone paving blocks, gas streetlights, and tall wooden poles supporting telegraph wires" (3). Magill describes the shift in commerce away from the Quarter to Canal Street, which demonstrates the decline in one area and the growth in the other:

The first few blocks were lined with small houses and manufacturers, while past the Customs House were large clothing and hardware dealers mingled with a few retailers. Between Chartres and Rampart Street was the center of the city's fashion and luxury trade . . . dry goods, notions, fashion, and jewelry stores. Its counterparts were New York's Broadway and Chicago's State Street By 1873 Canal Street was also the center of town. Throngs of people gathered here for events ranging from carnival parades to political demonstrations. . . . By the mid 1880s electric streetlights replaced gas, and countless telephone and electric wires tangled overhead on tall poles. Electric streetcars replaced mules, while paving stones gave way to asphalt Although the French Quarter was declining as a business center, Chartres and Royal Streets still remained important shopping districts, but Bourbon Street, previously a fashionable residential district, was being invaded by commerce. The most important building on Bourbon Street was the French Opera House [which was . . .] built in 1859 (Magill 3-5).

In the *Creoles of Louisiana* Cable describes the vibrant world of their culture epitomized by the boulevard known as Canal Street. His sketch suggests that the perceived "dividing line" between the French Quarter and the American Garden District was an amalgamation of cultures, rather than the separation and insulation depicted by Leona. Cable's description interweaves the people and the place:

Here stretches out in long parade, in variety of height and color, the great retail stores, displaying their silken and fine linens and golden seductions; and the fair Creole and American girls and the self-deprecating American mothers, and the majestic Creole matrons, all black lace and alabaster [. . . along] eighteen-foot sidewalks are loftily roofed from edge to edge by continuous balconies all the street-car lines in the town begin and end [here]. The Grand opera house is here; also the Art Union. The club-houses glitter here At the base of Henry Clay's pedestal here people rally to hear the demagogues in days of political fever Here sit the flower *marchandes*, making bouquets of jasmines and roses, clove-pinks, violets, and lady-slippers. Here the Creole boys drink mead, and on the balconies above maidens and their valentines sip sherbets in the starlight Here the gay carriage parties turn northwestwardhere the funeral train. . . . here the ring-politician mounts perpetual guard. Here the gambler . . . [It was a place of tethered horses, roaming goats, and fluttering lines of drying shirts and petticoats (266-268).

While this description suggests harmony, there were clear ideological differences between the Creoles and Americans. Creoles loved to go to restaurants and dances on Sundays, and the mostly Puritan Americans considered this practice scandalous. They also deplored the other entertainments of horse racing and theaters that Creoles enjoyed on Sundays. They thought that “New Orleans with its gambling dens, ballrooms, theaters, race tracks and rampant sexual permissiveness stood condemned as the ‘modern Golgotha’” (Tregle 150).

In spite of the lingering tension between the two cultures, progress was being made in the city. John Tregle and Joy Jackson describe some of these advancements: In 1879, Colonel James Buchanan Eads saw the completion of the jetties. This was a type of dyke system laid parallel to the river that narrowed the flow of water, thus causing the river to be self-cleansing, forcing the refuse out into the gulf rather than allowing it to build up at the mouth. That way, it prevented the build up of refuse, logs, and silt to replace the continually dredging. In 1876, people began taking the train, the New Orleans and Lake Rail Road to New Lake End, a popular resort where they could swim in the lake or have a picnic. There was also a restaurant and a hotel, and one can still see the remnants of this today in an area some locals call Bucktown. This resort was renamed West End Park in 1880. Another recreational site was located at the Spanish Fort where people could stay at the newly rebuilt Ponchartrain Hotel. There was also a theater and a casino there. The Railway Company turned it into an amusement park in 1883, but it was closed in 1903.

With these advancements, the city retained much of the French and Spanish cultural influence. Even as New Orleans underwent the inevitability of Americanization,

the newcomers who settled in the area created a unique culture that accreted the Creole cuisine, architecture, customs and traditions into a newly formed local identity, an inclusion that is unique to New Orleans. When the Americans built their mansions in the garden district, they included many Creole architectural elements into their designs, and they adopted many of the local customs and traditions as their own.

One of the major differences between the Creoles and the Americans was their perception of change. Fearing cultural usurpation, the Creoles perceived social change negatively and did not relish the notion of Americans adopting their customs and traditions. As Alfred Mercier, said, they feared their French “wine” was becoming “diluted,” a remark reflecting their cultural elitism. Regardless of the French Creole’s perception, until the late nineteenth century, New Orleans was “always a cosmopolitan city . . . [its] mixtures of European races set it apart from most of the South” (Jackson 17). Women wore “fine velvets, heavy silks, crepes and taffetas” in winter in the 1880’s (3) and, vendors sold “*estomac mulatte* (a flat ginger cake with icing), both coconut and pecan pralines, *candie Tiré*, (pulled candy), and rice cakes called *cala*. The favorite beverage sold was *La Biere Creole*, a beer made from the juice and pulp of pineapple” (3-4). Jackson explains that New Orleans retained much of the exotic ambience even during the postbellum era and beyond:

[New Orleans] managed to carry over into its late nineteenth-century life many of the customs, sights and sounds of antebellum days. Because it had French and Spanish heritage in addition to its bustling American business philosophy, the panorama it presented to visitors was unique. The architecture of the *Vieux Carré* and the French Market, the quaint street vendors, and the French patois of a sizeable part of the Negro population enthralled the visitor from the North, where conformity was fast overcoming individuality in cities (9).

While the Americans were adopting some of the French customs and traditions, the Creoles were embracing some of the Americans' commercial efficiency and organization. In his *America Revisited* (1882) a visitor from England, George Augustus Henry Sala (1828-1895), describes this amalgamation:

Occasionally in the French Quarter, you are forcibly reminded of the all-dominating influence of the Anglo-Saxon language, institutions and character . . . Still . . . street after street are French . . . I surveyed a genuine French *pharmacie* in the Rue de Chartres. It seemed to have been transported . . . all was subdued, composed, and serene. No doubt you could obtain *sinapismes*, and *vésicatoires* and *tisanes*. . . In the dim recesses of the store, you could discern rows of shelves laden with tall old white gallipots, and about the whole place there was a gentle soporific odour of aromatic drugs . . . A grave and bald-headed gentleman sat in a rocking chair . . . reading the *Abeille de la Nouvelle Orléans*. . . Next . . . was the *épicier* . . . [with] a plentiful supply of things alcoholic . . . absinthe and cassis, vermouth and parfait amour—all the alcoholic frivolities of the people . . . who never get tipsy . . . Here you are at once reminded that the tropics are over the way, or round the corner, so to speak. . . The coffee made in New Orleans is the most aromatic and the most grateful to the palate . . . there is a French *café* or an *estaminet* . . . The *cafés* lack Parisian splendour, but they are neat and trim . . . and the customers quench their thirst with *orgeat*, *bavaroises*, *sirop de groseille* . . . little French stationers' shops and *cabinets de lecture* . . . The very pencils and pens are French . . . and objects *religieux* (de Caro 86-88).

Often the center of trade was the Market, and it was the place where the cultural diversity of New Orleans converged. In the *Historical Sketchbook and Guide to New Orleans and Environs* (1885), in an article prepared for the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition, entitled, "The French Market," Will H. Coleman described the market. He used material from several authors, including Lafcadio Hearn:

As you near Jackson Square, a stream of busy-looking people appears, laden with baskets and bundles - - - its entrance is a marble topped stand, over which stands the title and sign of the *Café Rapide* . . . Every race that the world boasts is here, and a good many races that are nowhere else. The strangest and most complicated mixture of negro and Caucasian blood, with negroes washed white, and white men with mulattoes . . . The dresses are as varied as the faces . . . the floor of the market is not at all clean . . . At the end of the market . . . eat and trade a half-dozen Indians . . . Natchez, Choctaws and Creeks; [all. . .] have melted away into mulattoes . . . You enter the Bazaar market . . . evidenced by two tin cupolas This market is the most cosmopolitan of all. The air is broken by every language—English, French, Italian, and German, varied by gombo [sic] languages of every shade The bright sun leaks drowsily through the spider webs . . . the monotonous cries of the boys, “*cinq à dix sous*, “two cents apiece, Madame” At about three o’clock in the morning the sounds of many loaded carts . . . creak and rumble . . . as they go up the street . . . not “king’s English” alone is subjected to pretty rough handling, but every language on the globe is slanged, docked or insulted by uncivilized innovations . . . Nearly all trades, profession, colors and castes are represented with baskets on their arms Strangers who come into town late at night, bringing into the city with their rural tastes and appetites they look very modest when they climb on the high stools . . . [to order] “*café au lait*” or “*café noir*” (Coleman 89-93).

In spite of the thriving market, most businesses were moving to Canal Street, which was quickly becoming the town’s center and was a magnet for people from all over the area and from abroad. Jackson cites Charles Henry White’s description of Canal Street:

[It was] a great open street fringed by two and three story buildings . . . crowded trolley cars . . . policemen . . . a wide expanse of hazy sky and yellow clouds of dust hovering over an idle crowd [of . . .] race track touts, bookmakers, jockeys, commercial travelers, longshoremen, country folk in town for a day, clubmen on their way to an afternoon at the Pickwick of Boston clubs, and sightseeing naval personnel from visiting foreign vessels (13).

The city was a virtual feast of entertainment. In 1882, Mark Twain wrote that New Orleans was “well outfitted with progressive men [and that New Orleans . . .] was the best-lighted city in the Union” (200). He said that he enjoyed the men’s clubs and pleasure resorts and the high quality city newspapers. All over the city was an abundance of flowers and gardens, and the lavish Mardi Gras celebrations and carnival balls of 1880 brought in an estimated 40,000 visitors who came to celebrate the season. Travelers could stay at hotels or at *Pension Privee* (a type of bed and breakfast featuring Creole food) or rent a room (*chambres garnies /chambres a louer*). For entertainment, visitors could also go to baseball games, dances, the racetrack or gambling establishments. There were four theaters: Grand Opera House, French Opera House, St. Charles Theater and the Academy of Music. Wagner’s operas were performed at the Grand Opera House Leona often attended the opera with Placide Canonge and published her observations about the performances in the local newspapers.

Not only did the city center offer much entertainment, there were attractions outside the central city as well. Lake Ponchartrain had two resorts, the Spanish Fort and the West End. There one could eat or stay at a hotel, visit the gardens, listen to a German band, see the nightly fireworks, or see vaudeville acts. This area was internationally popular and as evidence of this, Oscar Wilde lectured at the Spanish fort in 1882 (Jackson 23-24). Before 1900, visitors could also see cockfights and dogfights on the outskirts of town. In 1883, the Southern Pacific Railroad was finally completed from New Orleans to California, which made its commerce and attractions even more readily available across the continent.

Beginning in December of 1884, New Orleans hosted the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition, where Queyrouze's *Symphony Indienne* was played by the Mexican Army Band. Burke was director-general of the Exposition held at the Upper City Park (now Audubon Park). The primary purpose of the Exposition was to celebrate the anniversary of the first time that a bale of cotton had been exported from America (from Charleston South Carolina) to a foreign port in 1784. Unfortunately, the exposition closed in June of 1885 with a deficit after having lost money over its six month run. In spite of this set back, the city moved forward, and there were advancements in education, particularly for women. Tulane University was founded in 1884, taking over the buildings of University of Louisiana, and Newcomb College opened in 1886 for women and focused on physical education and the arts, especially ceramics.

Women married young in the 1880s, but the nineteen year old Leona was not inclined her to become a wife and mother. She speaks of this in her poem, "*Lolotte*"

Happy little Lolotte
With her head in the air
And the heart of a butterfly!
In the mirror she dances
and looks with satisfaction
at the gilded splendor of her hair.
In the street she imagines
that her every steps captivates
all the handsome boys she sees.
At the dance she acts the ingénue
and responds without acknowledgement
to the compliments she receives.
Little happy Lolotte.
So loved, so pampered;
she charms purely for the pleasure of it all.
So why then, at the flower of her age

does she enter into marriage,
when she had all the time to choose?
(Appendix 259).

In 1885, Jackson notes that southern belles would ““read clever books, and discuss their fingernails; they are shocked at the conversational appearance of the word *leg*, but are enthusiastically devoted to the ballet. A young lady could receive a gentleman alone or go for a drive in his carriage, but the couple had to be escorted by a chaperone to theater, concerts, or balls”” (16). The “Society Bee” column in the *Daily Picayune* reported on the social elite. As probable reference to this or to Leona’s publications in *L’Abeille*, Lafcadio Hearn referred to her as one of the “bees” when he first met her. But she turned the image of a flighty social bee into a darker and more powerful one in her poem to Hearn about Medea, entitled “*Response*.” Far from belonging to a group of women who were concerned with superficial appearance, Leona projected a powerful image through her Medea who “reap[s] her harvest while humanity sleeps/and quietly claim[s] her own like a moth in the night.” She warned Hearn that she was a fearsome entity:

Poets make you honey, for she will make it poison
with her curses and cries without end,
falling from the heavens, and when hope grows dim,
her screams will tremble the walls of your prison.
She drinks deep the dew from the roses’ trembling chalices
And takes the rays of morning’s glory for her own
But she also rules the night.

[UU-70 6:45].
(Appendix 270).

Clearly, Leona was making a strong public statement about the power of women, even if Hearn chose to recoil from it. This was the voice of Leona at her most impassioned and forceful, and it can be found in her poems and articles in defense of her Creole culture that will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

At the same time that Leona was taking issue with the prevailing perception of women, laborers in the region also sought to affect changes in the work place. Unions began to gain strength in its membership and activism in the late 1800's, and there were several strikes for better wages and working conditions. In 1887, the Louisiana Farmer's Alliance and Cooperative Union was officially established, designed to protect farmers from fraud and to join together to become a political force. Also active at the time were the Knights of Labor who were equally concerned with labor issues, and they accepted blacks into their organization.

In many ways, however, the French Creoles separated themselves from the burgeoning contemporary society surrounding them, and it is difficult to find references in their writing about other social groups—other than Anglo-Americans. In the construction of their cultural island, they excluded from purview the people in the other districts of the city. These other ethnic groups were busy creating their own culture and entertainment, and as is commonly known, from their ranks jazz was born. At dance halls, early jazz musician got their start, and in *Jazz Masters of New Orleans* Martin Williams theorizes that jazz evolved because the classically trained Creoles of color played in local bands, sometimes made up of freedmen, and the combination of passion

and education gave birth to Jazz in the 1890s. The fact that such an important movement is notably absent in the French Creole writing indicates a current of cultural isolation.

Regardless of cultural divisions, all citizens in New Orleans dealt with local problems in varying degrees. In the 1880s, the city was rife with disease, such as yellow fever, diphtheria, typhoid, small pox. In the fall of 1890 the police chief, David Hennessey, was assassinated, and many suspected that the killers had been hired by powerful Italian families. Nineteen suspects were jailed, and even though several were acquitted, a cadre of outraged citizens stormed the jail and killed several of the inmates and dragged others out to be hung. This incident made international headlines in March, 1891, and was a source of shame and embarrassment for law abiding citizens. In 1894, there was a riot on the docks because the British cotton shippers tried to hire black screwmen (those who secured bales of cotton in the cargo areas of a ship before it sailed) at lower wages than whites. The white workers retaliated by throwing the black workers' tools overboard; several were beaten and some drowned. The violence continued until Governor Foster sent the militia in 1895 to keep the peace.

There were now more visible signs of the demise of the French Creole culture. In the Quarter, most were surviving rather than thriving:

[Many were] eking out an existence. . . the family plate, mahogany, and crystal had long since passed through the dealers' hands in Royal Street . . . from the 1880s on, the Creoles were a declining ethnic group and no longer a vital factor in politics . . . in its twilight hours (Jackson14).

By the time that Cable described the Creole culture and the *Vieux Carré*, Jackson says, their "way of life was only a museum piece which would pass out of general

existence within thirty years” (14). The use of the French language was fading in the 1890s. Many of the once beautiful homes were being replaced by the turn of the century shotgun houses and double tenement houses. By the end of the century, Jackson Square was little more than a slum. On September 29, 1915, there was a hurricane that almost destroyed the Old St. Louis Exchange Hotel, which was then torn down; it also destroyed the World’s Fair buildings at Audubon Park—the place where Leona had heard her symphony played by the Mexican Army Band only 30 years before.

Leona was witness to all of this and to the gradual disappearance of all that had been familiar-- the remnants of the life she cherished. Bourbon Street was a seedy commercial district; her beloved French Opera house had burned down; the French Quarter was often the site of criminal mischief, and the exhibition site where her symphony had been performed in 1884 was marked by nothing more than a stone, much like a headstone on the grave of her culture. In “*Imprecatio*” she expresses this loss when she says that “Our ancestors’ language/ Is now denigrated and only found on headstones” (*L’Abeille* May 3, 1891—Appendix 22). This sentiment is clearly expressed again in her 1911 poem “*Agonie*: ”

Once my soul held a cherished vision
and like a tree, it grew in strength and love
and its very summit held the skies aloft
with branches blooming into stars

And the night sky opened for the daughter of Ionie
and the tender violets bloomed without fear
to hope and was blessed by light--
So when were the dreams of souls broken?

What insidious worm began to gnaw at its core?
Which parasite drank up the sap of its heart?
And silenced the music of the heavens?

And leave my soul in the darkness of tombs
with its stars extinguished and blossoms closed--
Was it all a dream-- a dream all?
[UU-71 7:55].
(Appendix 237)

The decline in culture and fortune followed the Queyrrouze descendents. When I asked the family to describe the homes the family had occupied after they left St. Louis Street, Adele Cressy, Maxim's granddaughter, responded to me in a letter:

The house on Villere is long gone. The City bought the whole square and built a school. The house was a typical New Orleans shotgun single with boxwood steps and a wonderful side porch in the back and a brick alley. It had 4 rooms plus a kitchen and a bath had been added beyond the kitchen. We lived there during the 2nd World War. After that we moved to De Soto St. and lived with my grandfather.

--August 5, 1996.

While no one can understate the necessity for sweeping social changes in the closing decades of the nineteenth century, one must acknowledge that the demise of any ethnic culture affects us all. We lose the ability to recognize the sources of influences and infusion of other sensibilities into our national culture. In order to understand who we are as a people, we must understand those who left their imprint upon us. But in order to experience their lives, we must also experience their deaths and find empathy for the feelings of loss of a people and a place, with "its stars extinguished and blossoms closed." While we can visit the places where they once lived and see the remnants of their culture

in the architecture and customs, unless we understand what those relics represent, we will treat them as superficial exoticisms and fail to see their true significance. One way to understand the vision that the Creoles cherished is to study the places they inhabited, and while time has separated the people from the place, one cannot understand one without the other, for they are inextricably linked. The enclosed tropical courtyards, the bustling French market, the balconies where Creole beaus drank their mead, and the narrow streets where alabaster Creole matrons marshaled their daughters are still there, but the French Creoles have disappeared into America. The festivals and foods are still celebrated, but the people of the French Creole culture that created them are no longer clearly identifiable. What remains behind indicates the extent of the cultural development of this French colony—truly a foreign country—on American soil, and the Creoles’ attempt to remain a separate region by retreating into their secluded courtyards and practicing their French customs and language could not stem this tide of change. Outside their shuttered windows, New Orleans was slowly becoming increasingly Americanized. Granted, the insulated world they created became less a reality and more “all a dream” as the nineteenth century progressed, but the fact remains that many Creole writers chronicled their experiences during the disappearance of their social construct, and their work can prove beneficial for anthropological study. Even as they recognized that their efforts to preserve their culture were in vain, they joined together in their salons, which were folk groups trying to conserve the last vestiges of their French heritage. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Four, in their concerted attempts to safeguard their culture, they ultimately became instrumental in its transformation.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE SALON CULTURE AS A FOLK GROUP

Our country is our security as home is our
shelter; it is dependent on us as we are
dependent on it, and thus a state of reciprocal
custody is established. It is not a solid, compact
whole, but a mosaic, an aggregation of interests
welded together, and whose homogeneity
insures its duration –“Patriotism and Wagner”
Leona Queyrouze

Several prominent Creole community leaders tried to preserve the French Creole culture, many of whom were Leona's closest friends and members of her salon circle. She was supported and mentored by this group of men a generation apart from her. "From an early age, Leona Queyrouze was surrounded by older men who were at the same time her mentors, confidants or suitors" ("Special Exhibits" 9). These men were prominent figures: General P.G.T. Beauregard, Placide Canonge, Charles Gayarré, Drs. Armand and Alfred Mercier, Rudolph Matas, and Paul Morphy. Each one of these men influenced her, and a close look at each one of them will assist in understanding the part that they played in her life. While George Washington Cable was not one of her associates, his literary representation of the Creoles proved to be instrumental in the formation of their identity; therefore, a discussion of his work will be included because it represented an antithesis to the positions held by Gayarré, and many other Creoles.

In this chapter, I will widen the historical lens to encompass the members of the Queyrouze salon as a folk group because each contributes to its shared sense of identity. Their habits and customs reveal much about their underlying belief systems and their worldviews, which is vital to this project. Richard M. Dorson expresses the importance of this kind of study by stating that "a long step forward in American folklore studies can be

made if folklore in the United States is seen in its proper relation to major periods and themes in American history” (115). The “everyday life” that anthropologists and folklorists study re-captures the spirit of the people who practiced and preserved their customs and traditions, expressing what Gottfried von Herder calls the spirit of the *herrenvolk*, the mystical bonds of blood, tongue, culture and tradition. Harris M. Berger and Giovanna P. Del Negro believe that these “everyday practices may produce power relations [and . . .] resist and transform them” (7) and this is key in a study of an ethnic culture engaged in a power struggle to survive. This also answers the new historicist mandate to include groups that had “hitherto been marginalized, half hidden, or even entirely excluded from the professional study of literature” (Greenblatt and Gallagher 11). Elliott Oring defines “members of an ethnic group” as those who “share and identify with a historically derived cultural tradition or style, which may be composed of both explicit behavioral features as well as implicit ideas, values and attitudes” (24). A folk group is a microcosmic unit differentiated from the larger social system. Its members often share many of the same fears and beliefs handed down through generations, while consciously retaining their customs and traditions in order to preserve their sense of community. Thus, the group is maintained through a socially constructed process and is measured by an established, if often unspoken, criteria. Their social ties are strengthened when they interact with the larger social system, as evidenced by the Creoles’ relationship with the Americans. Indeed, the fact they did not consider themselves to be Americans illustrates this point.

Some critics might assert that the Queyrrouze salon does not fall clearly within the parameters of a folk group because its transmissions were not based on oral traditions and material culture and its reliance upon customary practices was not primary. Added to this is the fact that the members of the salon belonged to an elite class rather than popular or folk classes, but folklore does not belong solely to a class, it belongs to any group that has features in common, such a religion, ethnicity, region, or occupation. The members of the Queyrrouze belonged to a self-professed elite class, but they shared a common heritage, faith and community, and were united in the bonds of a common purpose. To stave off the influences of Anglo-American culture, the group directed its efforts towards preserving French traditions. Leona believed in this endeavor, and with the members of her salon, she pursued her passion for opera, music, and literature. What differentiates the Queyrrouze salon from other white French Creole salons in New Orleans was the extent of their involvement in preserving French literature through the *Athénée*.

Her published essays were often an outgrowth of these associations, and at times she echoed the sentiments of Gayarré. He believed that the Creoles, who were racially pure, intellectually sophisticated, agrarian aristocrats, were beleaguered and misunderstood. At other times, Leona departed from Gayarré when she spoke out against social injustice in *The Crusader* under the pseudonyms, Salamandra and Adamas—names that symbolized unwavering and unassailable ideals. On many occasions, her subject matter dealt with current political debate, and in some cases, her editorials and poetry were dedicated or addressed to group members.

The formation of her personal and social identity was inextricably tied to her association with her folk group. Rosan Augusta Jordan and Frank De Caro describe the

“role played by folklore in establishing identity whether personal or sociocultural” (31), and Elliott Oring adds that “identity has always been a central issue in folklore studies, even when the term was not specifically used” (31). An application of these concepts is particularly relevant when investigating folk groups who demonstrated intentional isolation, such as the French Creoles in Louisiana.

Jordan and de Caro assert that Louisiana offers a unique opportunity to observe the ways in which the study of folklore serves the “need to establish identities in term of race, class, and ethnicity” (33). They focus their discussion on the “development of folklore studies in Louisiana in which a concern with racial and class identity is an important factor,” and they look closely at the American Folklore Society of New Orleans in the 1890s and the work of Lyle Saxon and Louisiana’s “rich *mélange* of cultures” (32). Because Louisiana’s population had such a “long history of negotiating and modulating a variety of influences,” it was fertile ground for this kind of study. Jordan and de Caro cite the large artistic and intellectual community within the environs of the city that included the French, and they focus on “The Louisiana Association of the American Folk-Lore Society [which] was founded . . . [in] 1892 in New Orleans, largely through the efforts of Alcée Fortier, a Tulane University scholar of Romance languages and a potent force in Louisiana intellectual affairs” (33). Its membership was comprised of many of the all white (mostly female) social and intellectual elite in New Orleans, both American and Creole. Some of the members that Fortier recruited were his colleagues at Tulane. This group “prompted an interest in folklore among the flourishing community of intellectual, writers and artists that had emerged in New Orleans during the previous decade.” One of the foundations for this movement was a “national revival of interest in the South (which

was conceptualized in the most romantic and exotic terms)” and this “helped create a national market for Southern ‘local color’ writing.” This spurred the “literary careers of writers like George Washington Cable and Lafcadio Hearn, whose writing incorporated dialect and quaint local customs” and the dissemination for their work “helped create and publicize a romantic image of New Orleans, with its lush semitropical climate and its culturally distinctive inhabitants, notably the white Creoles and Afro-French Creoles of color (33). This romantic image (in its most benign form) was encouraged by the Creoles, and by their participation, they brokered the commoditization of their own culture.

From today’s perspective, many of their activities now appear elitist and racist, as they appropriated the dialect of African Americans and portrayed them as an exotic species—and used them as an outlet for their creative impulses. Jordan and deCaro point out that perhaps this focus on the black culture was a way to use “folklore, however unconsciously, to mark their own sense of white identity” and social superiority, crucial at a “time when to do so was politically and psychologically important for Southern whites” (39-40). Specifically for the Creoles, their “anxiety may have been more broadly based on feelings that their ethnic culture was under siege,” and this may have increased their “need to find distance from the most marginal ethnic group of all, the African Americans” (41-42) as well to a means to cleanse themselves of the stain of their slave-holding past. Much of the material the association gathered was used to “establish the antebellum plantation world at its benign best” (44). However, in their bid to separate their identity from the black population, they undermined their intentions, for the stories they related were inextricably tied to slavery. The stories often portrayed the “happy coexistence” of

the “peculiar institution” of slavery and its false sense of harmony, and this “nostalgia and apologia” counterbalanced the Creole need to separate (44).

Leona engaged in this nostalgic myth-building in her abbreviated English version of “*Silhouettes Créoles*” entitled “The Creoles.” Listing the positive characteristics of the Creoles, she portrays them as victims of the commercially savvy Anglo-Americans who take advantage of them. She notes that “hospitality is a salient characteristic of the inhabitants of Louisiana, and is inherent in them.” The Creoles have an “impulsive generosity and . . . kindness,” and she lists their “chivalrous traditions” and their “bravery which soon grows to be temerity and rashness when the apparently peaceful but in reality fierce temper of the Creole is roused.” While she acknowledges that “their supreme fault as a fraction of the American nation is to be so little practical,” she blames the Americans for their failure to thrive. The fact that the Creoles had “no special genius for speculation, and are not skilled in commercial tricks” is characterized as a virtue—indeed, they became innocent victims because they were “liable to be deceived in many ways.” Moreover, the Creoles did not “deserve the reputation of cruelty established for them by outsiders, more or less interested in doing so, and who found credulous and enthusiastic dupes to echo their rhetorical lamentations about the pitiful condition of slaves in the South” [UU-70 6:48]. However, her defense is logically flawed, if not consummately elitist. She creates an equivocation by stating that the Creoles were “liable to be deceived” (duped, if you will) because of their virtues, while accusing others of being ignorant dupes for believing that slaves experienced “pitiful conditions.”

She substantiates her claim against the negative perceptions of her culture by recounting the legend of the slave Christine who was purchased for one thousand dollars.

So devoted was Christine to her kind mistress that when she was freed, she asked to be sold for one thousand dollars so that she could return the money to her mistress.

Assuming that this legend would contravene any historical claims to the contrary, Leona closes her account by saying that she could “quote nothing better than this in defense of the so dreadfully calumniated slave owners in Louisiana” [UU-70 6:48]. Her goal in this excerpt appears to cleanse the historical record and to make the Americans culpable for maligning the Creoles.

This allegiance to a folk myth is indicative of the “varying motives and perspectives” of a folk group (Jordan and de Caro 46), and in order to study the Queyrouze salon I have deconstructed its components into biographical sketches in order to arrive at a sense of how it functioned and the purpose it served. Oring points out that folk groups are often the “other” as distinguished from the larger social system, and this is clearly the case for the Creoles in relation to mainstream America. This kind of folk group, explains Oring, “share and identify with a historically derived cultural tradition and style, which may be composed of both explicit behavioral features as well as implicit ideas, values, and attitudes” (24). Ethnicity, then, is speech, thought, and action based on a sense of identity. These groups are units within a “broader organization of social relations” (30), and this contrast strengthens their cultural traditions. Oring further shows that the “cultural context encapsulates a system of ideas, symbols, behaviors, and the social context is a set of principles governed by interrelationships and sets of behaviors in the comparative context” (140).

One of the most important elements found within a folk group is a shared belief system, and this can be seen the fierce ethnic pride of the French Creoles. Other elements

at work are the twin laws of Folklore—those of conservatism and dynamism. An ethnic group-- such as the Queyrouze salon-- is one that upholds cherished traditions and practices—hence its conservatism. At the same time it serves as a chronicle of social changes and the angst that these changes caused, thus demonstrating the dynamism of a folk group. When they told their stories and paid service to the myth of the Creole, they were engaged in the twin acts of preservation and creation. The self creation of lore reveals a distinct point of view—one that is created for and by the larger community or social group. In the case of the Creoles, this lore was a way to preserve their past, to hold onto their present, and to attempt to secure a position in the future.

This identification process was intensified through American and Creole interactions. Barbara Kirsheblatt-Gimblett describes the “folklorism effect,” which postulates that an object changes when it is observed (152) and Regina Bendix explains the role the tourist plays, to a certain degree, as an “agent of change” upon the host culture and the “degree of cultural resilience” the host culture exhibits in the process of negotiating the outsider’s gaze. (143). In the case of the Creoles, the American gaze created within them a self-awareness that forced them to make more reflective choices about their behavior. They found themselves placed on public display—not merely going about their private lives--and this self-consciousness transformed them into an exotic host culture. Many Creoles complained that tourists would travel to the Quarter with a copy of Cable’s *Grandissimes* in their pockets while looking for the “real life” characters described in the novel. The Creoles became incensed at their commoditization into an exotic curiosity. Even more troubling for them was the fact that under the microscopic lens, their foibles became magnified.

However, there were some benefits derived from this attention, for it served to preserve some Creole customary festivals. Bendix explains how economics play a factor in the objectification of a culture. Using the example of a Swiss Interlaken festival, she demonstrates how local customs and traditions create an economic boon and these are “open for strategic use” by the host society as a means to perpetuate its culture (143). An example of this theory in practice in New Orleans is the Mardi Gras celebration, which is not only a stimulus to the local economy but a means to display and therefore preserve a unique culture. While this may raise some question about the authenticity of a culture-- one that self-consciously produces traditions for tourist display-- the host culture may consider that the benefit of self-preservation overrides other considerations.

The value of applying a folklore lens to the Queyrouze salon is that it can reveal the values, fears and beliefs of microcosmic culture, one that was consciously self-defining and self-preserving. As such, the salon is a social document constructed by its own ideology, trying to affect change and preserve tradition, thereby abiding by the twin laws of folklore. This also underscores the need to approach their culture from a new historical perspective where their social system is seen in context, enabling us to explore not only what it *is*, but what it *does*-- how it functions within the larger framework of New Orleans society, its contact with American values, and the political, economic and ethnic framework within which it existed.

Each member of the Queyrouze salon contributed to the construction and perpetuation of their folk group in a mutually influential and defining system. As I interpret this group, I acknowledge that by observing it from the present, as Richard

Handler and Jacklyn Linnekin indicate, my mediated perceptions are compromised for I am “distanced or apart from the object reconstructed” and I acknowledge that I am engaged in a “process of interpretation” that makes “meaning in the present through making references to the past” (287). In spite of these limitations, I will re-assemble the group with brief biographical sketches in order to show how each one informed Leona’s worldview. The salon members were from an elite class: Mollie Moore Davis (journalist), Paul Morphy (chess champion), P. G. T. Beauregard (Confederate General and politician), Placide Canonge (novelist and dramatist), Alfred Mercier (physician), Adrien Rouquette (clergy), and Charles Gayarré (historian). These people would later mentor Leona, and through descent, she inherited many of their values, beliefs and assumptions. However, just as every new generation brings its own perspective to society, so does Leona bring her own unique viewpoint.

While Leona’s salon was dominated by men, there was one notable exception, Mollie Evelyn Moore Davis. She was also a member of the Louisiana Association of the American Folk-Lore Society and served as a magnet for the Crescent city’s social elite. Jordan and de Caro state that she and her husband, a journalist, came to New Orleans in 1879:

Lacking funds for impressive living quarters, the Davises took up residence of Royal Street in the French Quarter, taking advantage of cheap rents in what was then a rather shabby residential area. But the Davises had the vision to recognize in the French Quarter houses . . . the potential for creating an interesting and romantic environment . . . Her parties were the social center for the city’s intellectual and artistic elite (34).

Davis was a regular contributor to the Folk-Lore society and wrote several volumes of poetry, short stories and sketches, some of which were published in the *Journal of American Folklore*. She also translated one of Leona's poems, "Response:"

Medea, hast thou said, and rightly thou
Hast named her, this proud woman with sad eyes
And savage heart where dark rebellion lies;
And who in each loved hand sees treason glow!
Poet, thy honey sip! The poison slow
Is hers of curses wild, and hopeless cries,
And prayers unheard from anguished hearts that rise,
And shrieks that shake the donjon to and fro.
Drink thou the dew from trembling chalices,
Take for thine own the morning's mysteries;
But leave to her the midnight wan and chill
Where blessings fell there grow the flowers of hate;
There is her harvest, there, when all is still,
And, mist-like, flies the night-moth desolate

(*L'Abeille* May 27, 1887) [UU-70 6:45]

While there is no correspondence between the women to be found in the Queyrouze collection, Davis' position in Creole society was one that would have brought her into close association with Leona. Perhaps Davis was received by the Creoles because she and her husband chose to live in the French Quarter and because they shared a similar love of literature. Leona's acceptance of Davis indicates that Leona's resistance to Americans was more general than particular and that she crossed that cultural divide when she encountered someone who was a kindred spirit. However, Leona's association with women seems to be more the exception than the rule, and this sense of isolation filters into her work, as I shall demonstrate in Chapter Six. Unlike other women writers in

the period who shared a literary discourse and a sense of commonality, Leona seems to have had little of this kind of companionship. Hers was a world of men.

The man who was closest to Leona's age was Paul Morphy (1837-1884), and he was twenty-four years her senior. Leona took piano lessons from his mother at their house at 417 Royal Street (present location of Brennan's Restaurant). At the young age of thirteen, Morphy was already famous for his skill at Chess, and in 1850 he defeated reigning chess master Janos Lowenthal of Hungary. By 1857 he had defeated all the American chess players, and then approached Howard Staunton of England who refused the challenge. Morphy then tackled the French champions. Even though he was blindfolded, he still managed to beat them after ten hours of play. He returned to his home in New Orleans in 1859. After failing to inspire anyone else to join him in competition, he retired from public life in 1860.

During his lifetime, he garnered much praise and attention and had many women admirers, but he later told Leona that he did not give much credit to his fame. Leona remembers that his "most salient characteristic always was an invincible aversion to popularity, which gradually developed into an unusual disdain of celebrity" (Weise 9). Morphy died in 1884 of apoplexy at the age of forty-seven after a long bout with mental illness. At the time of his death, Leona was twenty-three, and when she met Hearn three years later, he encouraged her in her writing of the Morphy biography. (This unpublished manuscript can now be found at the Williams Research Center in New Orleans). Hearn considered her "Morphy Sketch" to be a "psychological work" reflecting not only Morphy, but Queyrouze as well" (Wiese 9). In this sketch, Leona lavishly praises Morphy's brilliance and skill, and her fondness for him is evident. Hearn's assessment is

accurate, for this work reveals Leona's desire to idealize and romanticize those she held in high esteem. This same idealization and sentimentalism surfaces in her memoir about her relationship with Hearn, one that she wrote towards the end of her life, and the *Idyl* reveals as much about Leona as it does Hearn. A common thread throughout her oeuvre is a tendency to romanticize her loved ones, and this ideality extended to her own culture.

Another influential member of her salon was Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard (1818-1893), who was Leon Queyrouze's close friend. A native of New Orleans, Beauregard served in the U.S. Army until February 1861. He then joined the Confederate Army and had an illustrious career. During the war, he directed the attack on Fort Sumter, served as second in command in the First Battle of Bull Run, and took command at Shiloh. In 1863 he defended Charleston, and in 1864 he defeated General Butler at Drury's Bluff, Virginia. When he returned to New Orleans after the Civil War in 1866, he tried his hand, unsuccessfully, at several business ventures. After a failed attempt to secure a Foreign Service appointment or to garner a commission, he resorted to working the state lottery, and he was often criticized for his connections with this program.

Beauregard was one of the members of the *Athénée*, a social organization created to provide a literary outlet for its members, and he encouraged Leona's writing career. The *Athénée* was comprised of all male members, but because of Leona's impressive intellectual and literary skill, the group invited her to join, and she became the only female member of this society. When she presented her speech "Patriotism and Wagner," Beauregard was one of her sponsors, and because of him, she became the first woman in New Orleans to read from her own work in public. Through him, she became acquainted with local and state politicians, and he introduced her to the president of Mexico when he

attended dinner at Beauregard's home. Thus, he proved to be a supportive and well-connected member of her salon who aided her in furthering her career and providing access to influential political figures.

Leona was very loyal to the members of her salon, and when James Redpath, Jefferson Davis' biographer, launched an attack against Beauregard's character, Leona was quick to defend him. In 1890 she took exception to Redpath's claim that Jefferson Davis had the "utmost contempt for that frivolous little Frenchman Beauregard." She admonished Redpath, saying that "to destroy is a far easier task than to create. She cited Beauregard's integrity, and criticized Davis, saying that a person who "scatters his opinions, words & manuscripts to the four winds, really speaks confidently to no one" [UU-68 2:17]. Her defensive response indicates her inability to countenance any slights against those she idealized, a quality that permeates her work

Perhaps her closest companion in the salon was Louis Placide Canonge (1822-1893), even though he was almost forty years her senior. Placide was born into a prominent Creole family profiled in Grace King's *Creole Families of New Orleans* (1921). His grandfather had been a prominent judge and had four sons: "All were educated in Paris at the Collège Louis le Grand" [*Lycée Louis le Grand*] (King 395). Placide returned from France a very cultured young man and quickly became involved in New Orleans society. He was an "elegant man, known for his sharp wit Because of his worldly interests, refined opinions and sophisticated tastes, New Orleans came to regard him as the prototypical Frenchman" ("Special Exhibits" 11:5). Grace King describes him:

. . . for half a century [he was] was the bright light of literature in New Orleans. He was the brilliant collaborator in the “*Abeille*,” the only French newspaper in Louisiana, and infused into it a vitality that it lost at his death. He was also the hero of his time in the gay world of society. He wrote light comedies and proverbs in prose and in verse, which under his direction were acted in the private and exclusive salons of the society leaders, the roles being filled by the beaux and belles of the “beau monde” (396).

His passion for theater and opera was well known, and he served as director of the French Opera House for two years (1873-1875). He also loved to write plays, and *Le Comte de Carmagnola* “debuted in New Orleans in 1852 and later had a run of one hundred performances in Paris. Canonge created two amateur theater clubs and served as manager of the Orleans Theater in 1860” (“Special Exhibits” 11:5). He was known for his out-spoken nature, and because of this was involved in several duels. During the war, and was forced to leave New Orleans because he was openly hostile towards the Union in his role as the editor of *Courier Louisianais*. When the war was over, he began his journalism career once again, first attempting to start his own newspaper, *L’époque*, and then finally working for *L’Abeille* in 1882 at the age of sixty. He would continue his work there, often writing under the *nom de plume*, Réne, for the next eleven years until his death in 1893 at the age of seventy-one. During his lifetime, Placide encouraged and supported Leona’s literary career. As editor of *L’Abeille*, he offered an outlet for her work, at the same time he inspired her poetry.

Leona and Canonge wrote to each other regularly and his letters to her can be found among the Queyrouze papers: eight letters in 1887, sixteen letters in 1888, thirteen letters in 1889, and thirty-five in 1890-1891. A study of these and the letters, and the ones

to his dear friend in Paris, Henri Vignaud, reveal a man who was sensitive and vulnerable, a condition belied by his polished social grace. As a long-time friend and companion, one who often accompanied him to the opera, Leona was privy to this private side for Canonge. The closeness of their relationship is revealed in her poem, “à *L’Opera*,” that she dedicated to him.

This poem was inspired by Verdi’s opera, *La Traviata*, which tells the story of Violetta Valéry, a kept woman who falls in love with Alfredo Gremont, a man who truly loves her. She leaves her reprobate life and begins her idyllic days with him only to have these shattered by the disapproval of his family. Forced to leave him, she falls into poverty and sickness, and when he finally comes her to reclaim her, it is too late.

Catherine Clément believes that the social injustice portrayed in this opera have to do with the victimization of the female heroine on two levels: one is at the hands of the family and the other at the disposal by her society. In her family, Violetta is subjected to “harsh familial law” and she had no way out of this but to follow a “deadly rite of sacrifice” (60). She also “embodies the secret schemes of the seated bourgeoisie, who adorn her, dress her, undress her, and prostitute her” (61).

These themes underscore the message of injustice when Leona asks the question, in her poem “à *l’Opera*”: “*Qui n’s pleure, souffert? Et, qui l’ose avouer*” (For whom do we weep? And for what do we dare to claim?). Sharing how deeply the opera affected her, she describes her awakened pain and sadness, which indicates a level of trust and intimacy in her relationship with Canonge:

Our chairs were touching as the soft accents of
Violetta's song disturbed the space between us,
Her hymn learned too late burned into our hearts,
Embracing us both with powerful sweetness
Entering our sleep, awakening the pain.

.....

At one time we believed that nothing could affect us
To the bottom of our being, that all was silence.

But the art of the archer is to make us quiver.
Pulling like a golden chain to places where silence moans
And we find the strength to live again only to suffer

[UU-71 7:56]

(Appendix 262).

This poem compares Violetta's experience to their own, cloaking both in a robe of
victimization. The grief she shares with Canonge intensifies when she writes her eulogy
for him in 1893.

"In Graeciam"

*Hommage douloureux rendu à Monsieur L. Placide Canonge l'ami tant
regretté, mort le 22 Janvier 1893.*

The hand let go and dropped the fragile vessel
Once so full of mead, and the echoing vase
Is broken, spilling its fragrant liqueur . . .

.....

With its perfume, I will write my sacred poem to you,
And from my memories I will pluck
My verse, soft and sad, in this diaphanous hour

.....

Suddenly a strange cold comes over me
Blowing against the flame and against the phalanx
Where the flare of tombs ignites the granite
Which towards you inclines, and I resist and curse
For I saw the thunderbolt strike the trees
Illuminating how cold, how heavy, is this white coat of marble.

Three times the Angelus repeated the word, and my song begins its ending with a sob [UU-71 7:55] (Appendix 252).

In this poem she situates Canonge within the realm of the gods, which serves as another example of her predilection to idealize her loved ones. For her, Canonge was the quintessential Frenchman, a man of grace, intellect, and refinement.

Perhaps less intimate, but no less influential, in Leona's life was Alfred Mercier (1816-1894). He was a Creole born of French parents who moved to Louisiana. Like Placide Canonge, Mercier was educated at the *Collège Louis le Grand* in Paris. He returned to Louisiana, but left once again to spend time in Boston before taking a "Grand Tour;" this included five months in Italy and Sicily before returning to France. While there, he provided news of the 1848 Revolution to newspapers in New Orleans. After he married, he began studying medicine, and after he graduated he brought his family to Louisiana and opened his practice in New Orleans. When the Civil War broke out, he returned to Paris and while there tried to garner support for the Confederate cause. After the Civil War, he again returned to New Orleans and began his writing for the *New Orleans Picayune* and *Les Comptes-Rendus de l'Athénée Louisianais*.

Mercier wrote against the practice of miscegenation and questioned the church's dictates regarding the celibacy of priests. He wrote love stories as well. His publications are as follows: *Le Fou de Palerme* (*The Fool of Palermo* 1873), which had been inspired by his sojourn in Italy and Sicily, *La fille du prêtre* (*The Priest's Daughter* 1877), which criticized the Catholic Church's stance on celibacy, and *L'Habitation Saint Ybars* (*The*

Saint Ybars Plantation 1881), much of it written in Creole patois. In 1885 he was honored with the distinction of being elected as an officer of the Legion of Honor by the French government.

Like Placide Canonge, he loved the theater and opera and contributed several reviews of performances at the French Opera House. In 1876 he became “a founding member of *l’Athénée Louisianais*. This group created the *Comptes Rendus de l’Athénée Louisianais*, which served as a vehicle for the publication of local French writers. Queyrouze often published her poetry and essays in the *Comptes-Rendus*, a “collection of literary and scientific papers” (Tregle 183). Mercier served as the organization’s secretary and treasurer until his death in 1894 at age seventy-eight.” (“Special Exhibits” 9:2). As the “founder of the *Athénée Louisianais* for the preservation of the city’s cultural heritage [Mercier was] its guiding spirit from 1876 to his death [on May 12] 1894” (Tregle 183). However, even at the time that the *Comptes Rendus* was publishing the work of French Creoles, it was becoming a relic of the past, no “more than a nostalgic remnant in the midst of an American city” (Tregle 184).

Mercier tried to keep his culture alive but not-- as some critics argue--at the expense of other ethnic groups. Tregle asserts that Mercier did not believe in “Creole ‘aristocracy’ or cultural superiority.” Rather, he “found simple satisfaction in the simple joy of keeping alive the endangered use of the French tongue” (184). Mercier was instrumental in preserving the Creole discourse and as such demonstrates the Conservative law of the Twin Laws of Folklore. But his hopes to keep the French literary culture alive in New Orleans failed, primarily because many Creoles did not take the time to read, write, and publish. Leona was an exception, of course, but when French

bookstores were going out of business because of lack of patronage, and when the *Athénée* meetings were attended by fewer and fewer people, Mercier could see that they were losing the battle of cultural preservation. By the 1890s, the *Athénée* meetings only attracted “fewer than fifteen” (Tregle 184), and French foreign visitors were greeted by fewer of their kindred spirits. When Mercier died at age seventy-eight in 1894, the *Athénée*, for all practical purposes, died with him. Although it was revived by Alcée Fortier in the 1900s, it essentially ceased to exist until its resurgence one hundred years later in 1980s. In an article “Progress of the French Language” (“*Progrès de la langue Francaise*”) written for *Les Compte-Rendus* in 1883, Mercier wrote:

The day when we will no longer speak French in Louisiana . . . there will no longer be Creoles; the original and powerful group they formed in the great national family of the United States will have vanished, just a wine poured into a running river loses its flavor and color
(“Special Collections” 9:2).

Mercier, like Leona, could see that the transplanted culture in New Orleans was quickly becoming devoured by the surge of Americanism, and he used similar imagery to describe the experience.

Another avid defender of the French Creole culture was abbé Adrien Rouquette (1813-1887). He was not a member of the Queyrouze salon, per se, but he is included here because of several associative factors: his adherence to romantic literary traditions in his work, his friendship with Lafcadio Hearn, his correspondence with Leona in 1885, and his vociferous attacks against George Washington Cable. Rouquette, like Leona, was part of the local aristocracy and wrote poetry, “inspired by French Romanticism” (Tregle

289). His “life and work were living examples of French Romanticism transplanted to a Louisiana setting and thriving vigorously long after Romanticism had ceased to be a vital force in European intellectual circles” (290). He was born in New Orleans and was the child of a Frenchman who had settled in New Orleans and had pursued the same occupation as Leon Queyrrouze, as a wine merchant. Rouquette attended school in New Orleans at the *Collège d’Orléans*, and later continued his education in Kentucky, New Jersey, and then in Nantes and Renne in France. He returned to the states in 1883 and began living with a Native American tribe on the Bayou Lacombe, but he often visited France. He entered the priesthood in 1841 at “the Plattenville seminary in Assumption parish and was ordained a priest in 1845” (“Special Exhibit” 10: 4). For fourteen years he served at the St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans where he became a vicar. It was during this time that he befriended Lafcadio Hearn. However, he retreated from the pressures of a large parish to lead a monastic life, choosing to serve in a small chapel at Bayou Lacombe. He succumbed to a mental illness late in life and died in 1887 at the age of seventy-four, the same year the Hearn departed New Orleans.

As a member of the same folk group, he shared with Leona many of the same values, beliefs, and fears. Their social values descended from a very similar family background and education, and their writing styles favored the aesthetics of the French Romantic tradition. Moreover, they both wrote in defense of their culture, which was spurred by an underlying fear that their way of life was under assault—one fueled by the writing of George Washington Cable. Rouquette “bitterly criticized Cable’s portrayals [of Creoles] and refuted [these] in the columns of the French daily, *L’Abeille*” (Tregle 290).

Rouquette and Leona were joined in their efforts to counteract Cable's depiction of their culture by the venerable historian, Charles Etienne Arthur Gayarré.

Charles Gayarré (1805-1895) became the most vociferous defender of the Creole culture. In *The Great South*, Edward King described Gayarré as a “prominent historian and gentleman of most honorable Creole descent” (Tregle 171). He was considered to be the “Father of Louisiana history,” and Grace King described him as “not only the historian of Louisiana but the history of it as well.” When he died “a great and a good and useful life had ceased to exist in the community . . . and a great, good and useful volume had been closed” (269).

The son of “Carlos Gayarré and the youngest daughter of sugar planter Etienne de Boré,” Gayarré “was raised in wealth and Creole privilege” (Jackson 299). He was born in January of 1805 and grew up on his grandfather's plantation, which was situated a few miles from New Orleans (299). He went to a private school at his cousin's (Fourcher) plantation and then left for boarding school at the College of Orleans. After his graduation in 1825, he left to study law in Philadelphia and passed the Pennsylvania bar in 1828 before returning to New Orleans to practice law. He quickly ascended the political ladder, first becoming a representative in the legislature in 1830, then serving as Attorney-General before becoming a senator for the United States. After his marriage to Ann Buchannan of Mississippi, he began completing his history of Louisiana, utilizing archive material he had collected during the previous eight years. During his tenure as Secretary of State, he was instrumental in procuring and disbursing funds that provided for the erection of the statue of Washington in the State House Rotunda and the statue of Jackson in Jackson Square.

During the Civil War, some New Orleans citizens left for the countryside, and I assume that the Clara Queyrouze took her infant daughter to *Leona* plantation near St. Martinville while her husband was at war. Likewise, Gayarré retreated to his rural home *Roncal* “named for the old home of the Gayarré’s in Spain” (King 187), but in spite of this self-protective move, he nevertheless lost most of his fortunes during the war. He and his wife took measure to keep their valuables safe:

[They buried] his wife’s jewelry and diamonds and his treasured heirlooms; the shoe buckles and sword hilt studded with brilliants that belonged to his father; his grandmother’s miniature in a frame surrounded with diamonds; de Boré’s snuffbox; in short, all the priceless innumerable trinkets of generations of his family (King 288).

However, his valet, William, spied on them, stole their belongings, and sold them. Gayarré said that William was ““the most accomplished valet and rascal in the world”” and that he was able to “live on the proceeds” for many years thereafter (King 288).

After the war Gayarré served as a reporter for the Supreme Court Judges in Louisiana, and throughout the rest of his life, he often had to rely on his writing for economic support. He completed the *History of Louisiana* Volume I in 1846, which was “the official history of Louisiana from its colonization by Iberville to its cession by France to Spain” (King 80-182). (He completed Volume II *French Domination* in 1847, Volume III *The Spanish Domination* in 1854, and Volume IV *The American Domination* in 1866). In addition, he wrote several historical articles, lectures, and sketches. When asked by New Orleans’s “People’s Lyceum” to give a lecture, he offered “The Poetry and Romance of the History of Louisiana,” one that was culled from a larger body of work entitled *The American Domination*, comprised of several lectures.

Gayarré's work serves as an example of both of the Twin Laws of Folklore, Conservatism and Dynamism. In the act of attempting to preserve his culture, he was also constructing a self-defining narrative. Oring describes this dynamic: when folk group members attempt to define their culture, they are simultaneously preserving and changing it because the attempt "goes beyond society and culture, and informs analysis and interpretation" (140). Gayarré's speech "The Creoles of History and the Creoles of Romance" given at Tulane, I argue, was an example of this dynamic. He was articulating "a system of ideas, symbols and behaviors" in a "social context" (140) and transforming it at the same time. By carefully constructing his vision of a *Creole* he contributed to the Creole myth. By this act he was attempting to resurrect a mythological past and to lay claim to the future interpretations.

Grace King describes Gayarré's method of creating a carefully constructed narrative. She often visited Gayarré at his home, and even though she admired him, she had reservations regarding the accuracy of some of his accounts in his lectures. Gayarré admitted that if he "gilded" the facts a bit, he could lure his readers into listening, but the disadvantage of this was that his slanted truths became perpetuated errors, as they were repeated and retold. King, however, does defend the practice by saying that some benefit was derived of this practice. In Gayarré's accounts "the things of the heart became confused with the things of the mind, [but] the gain has been that . . . the history of the State is vivid and picturesque" (King 282); however, King deplored the fact that Gayarré's "poetic sentiment" had made its way into the "education systems of today." Indeed, she says, "it has been in truth too generously prolific" (282). She points out that "our historical questions were to him questions of memory, and his memories have

become historical documents” (271). She admits that even it was possible to redact these sentimental contributions to history, the result “would produce indeed something like a collapse in our native pseudo-historical literature” (King 282). This indicates how much this folklore structure relied upon his narrative.

In the waning years of his life, Gayarré became increasingly bitter about his failure to mitigate the negative perceptions of his culture. Worse still, he witnessed the disappearance of his way of life and felt that he was powerless to stop it. Like many Creoles, he felt that he had become an unwilling immigrant upon his native soil. During his lifetime, he had “seen the transplanted flag, language, and government become home bred to the soil” (King 270). He did acknowledge, however grudgingly, that the Creoles were partially responsible for their own demise, although he places the greater burden of blame upon the shoulders of the Union. In an 1873 interview with Edward King for *Scribner’s Monthly*, Gayarré says that “the Reconstruction had engendered such misery, and fear of ‘negro government’ was so widespread, that Louisiana’s white population stood ready to embrace any change in authority and submit . . . to ‘any other species of despotism’” (Hair 107). With rancor, he blames the Americans, saying that there was “no hope for salvation’ as long as the Yankees kept ‘their stinking puritan foot on our breast’” (qtd in Tregle 170).

Leona shared some of Gayarré’s sentiments, and in her writing, one can find similar rancor. As she had with Beauregard, she was quick to defend her dear friend, Gayarré, for he had supported her and encouraged her career throughout her life, and when she stood before a podium at the armory of the Continental Guards to present her lecture on “Patriotism and Wagner,” Gayarré had stood by her side and had introduced

her. Later, when Gayarré came under fire for his romanticized views of the Creole culture, she rushed to his defense. She believed that he was an “impartial Louisiana historian,” and quotes his views regarding the Creole culture in her “*Silhouettes Creoles*”:

The appellation of *aristocracy* is one that suits us well to employ for there did exist an aristocracy in Louisiana. But how some apply the term now is ridiculously false, for how it existed is nothing similar to the shadow it casts; our society was essentially plebian and democratic [UU-70 6:47].

She adds to his description of the “the true type of Creole” by saying that the quintessential Creole was a “chivalrous Frenchman and Spaniard.” Like Gayarré, she casts the blame for their social afflictions upon the Americans: The change, she says, had been caused by the “absorption of the Creole race into the Anglo Saxon element, notably those from the east” [UU-70 6:47]. The underlying assumption in this statement is that the “pure” French were being diluted and deluged by the flavorless and relentless flood of America, adopted Gayarré’s role as defender of their culture.

Gayarré died at age ninety on February 11th 1895, the same year as Leona’s father. According to King, Gayarré continued to write until a year before his death. However, his “circle of friends grew smaller as he lived on, outliving them” (290). He was survived by his wife who passed away in 1914. At the time of his death, he lived in a small house on Prieur and Kerlerec (Leona also lived in a house on Kerlerec) and he was buried in the old St. Louis Cemetery in his grandfather’s tomb. Leona publicly acknowledges him on May 2, 1891, discussing “how our river destroys so much, including the old cemeteries where our beloved ancestors lie in rest, so many of old Creole families.” She laments the passing of the “sacred traditions” that are “all we have left.” She believes that tradition is

their “only inheritance . . . and our honor that we brought from our homeland.” Therefore, with the passing of Gayarré, she says that she is witnessing “one our the last knight of our Creole race—this historian *Votre humble et fidèle ami* [UU-71 8 :60].

With equal fervor, Leona joined with the other Creoles in their passionate rejection of George Washington Cable. He proved to have a deep impact on the Creoles and was instrumental (as was Gayarée) in the development of the Creole identity. Cable depiction of the Creole culture functioned as a counter-narrative to the one created by the Creoles, and thus served as a key component in their construction of the folk group identity. By *negation*, he aided the Creoles in defining their identity. In other words, he described characteristics that the Creoles sought to reject from their composite structure, and thereby provided a contrast that helped delineate the folk group.

Two of the many ways a group defines itself are by contrasting its structure to another and by making self-conscious choices about its behavior when subjected to the gaze of others, and Cable facilitated the group in both of these areas. Another benefit he provided was to strengthen the social connections within the subject group, particularly because the Creoles felt that their ethnic culture was under attack. Overall, the folk group’s attitudes, beliefs, and values were more clearly articulated within this context. The Creoles felt that they were fighting a battle for survival, and with pen and ink they dueled for the right to write history. Cable, they believed, was an outsider who did not have the right to claim their story.

In “Creoles and Americans,” Tregle points out that even Cable was born in New Orleans, his family was from Virginia, and that distinction proved to be very important to the French Creoles. Joy Jackson says that Cable was “not a typical New Orleanian—if

such a figure really existed. His father was a Virginian; his mother, of New England ancestry” (284). While most French Creoles were Catholic, Cable “was devoutly Presbyterian, taught Sunday school, and refused to do any work or follow any frivolous amusement on Sunday. He was also deeply imbued with a humanitarian zeal” (284).

His background alone was not the issue that divided him from his fellow citizens in New Orleans, but rather his depiction of their culture in his novels. To give his work verisimilitude, during his “walks through the *Vieux Carré*, he carefully selected picturesque buildings to use as the settings for his stories . . . copying down the broken English which he heard among the humbler residents” (Jackson 285). When he used this dialect to give voice to his characters, he “infuriated the aristocratic, upper echelon of Creoles” who felt he demeaned them. While this proved to be unsettling for elitists, the issue that was most inflammatory was Cable’s “indiscriminate use of the word *Creole* to include the colored Creoles and well as white French-speaking New Orleanians.” This proved to be “the sorest point of all” (286).

In *Grandissimes* Cable depicted the “Creole society as an aberration of history, committed to a dead past long ago abandoned by enlightened and progressive communities.” They were prone to “white supremacy [ideology] and meaningless family pride . . . indolence, ignorance, cruelty, superstition and hypocrisy” (175). Cable revealed the evils of miscegenation and of slavery in his description of the death of Bras Coupe in a “sweeping condemnation of their culture” (175). The issue that was most incendiary for the Creoles was expressed in Cable’s *The Creoles of Louisiana* (1884), which inferred that the Creoles did not have pure bloodlines. Tregle provides evidence of Cable’s low opinion of Creoles by citing his work “Creole Slave Songs.” In it, Cable describes “low

white Creoles—not milk white or lily white or even probably white, but just white enough to make them ten thousand times better than a negro” (176). With this kind of rhetoric, it is not surprising that many Creoles took offense given their heightened insecurities about ethnic identity. Grace King felt that Cable sacrificed the Creoles on the altar of the Yankee dollar. She emphatically believed that Cable simply “did not understand the Creoles” (Jackson 286).

Dr. Alfred Mercier who founded the *Athénée Louisianais* deplored Cable’s indictments, but admitted that the situation might be even worse than imagined. Exposed to the world, the Creoles could no longer hide their deficiencies and questionable practices in the relative obscurity of an isolated cultural island. They never forgave Cable for holding up a mirror that reflected their secret foibles, deficiencies, injustices, and indolence. Cable so upset the Creoles that in 1879 Gayarré declared that even God had put a curse on their community. This curse is described by Cable as the “haunted heart”—a heart haunted by the sins of the past, and in 1885 he declared that only evil could come from “a society grounded in the abomination of racial arrogance and social injustice . . . ignorance, moral insensitivity and cultural impoverishment” (Tregle 178).

Even though Cable attacked those he believed were guilty of injustice, he nevertheless felt that there were those in the South who believed as he did—that the Constitution allowed for equality for all. “In spite of the abuse heaped upon him, he was convinced that there existed a “Silent South,” a great body of public opinion which secretly agreed with him” (11). He believed that “principles of justice [were being] violated,” and he “pleaded with the South not to demean, insult and permanently degrade the Negro because it was morally and ethically wrong to do so” (12). Charles Wynes,

however, points out that this may have been naiveté on Cable's part, for "there was never any great body of public opinion constituting the 'Silent South'" (5). Wynes reminds us of the risk involved in speaking against prevailing sentiments and points out that "only the most courageous or economically and socially secure dared to speak out in a vein bound to incur the censure of the majority" (5). Indeed, even from his position of strength, Cable proved to be fallible. The attacks upon Cable intensified at the time that Gayarré's friend, Alexander Dimitry, died in 1882. Gayarré turned his grief and anger upon Cable primarily because Cable had credited Dimitry with giving him information about Creoles. Incensed, Gayarré launched an attack against Cable in 1885 in the *Times-Democrat*. He also defended the integrity of the Creole culture in a speech at the *Athénée* called "*La race Latine en Louisiane.*" In another lecture, "*Les Grandissimes*" he declared that Cable's novel was profoundly untrue.

The attacks against Cable reached such force that he, who had been a "discerning and foremost social critic of the South" (6), was "almost driven from his native land" (8). After 1892, he expressed his views "less openly," eventually writing "nothing further on the Negro" (8). By that time, the Creole myth had become *de facto* for most Creoles.

The Creoles continued their attempts to preserve their culture and to dynamically lay claim to future interpretations of their society according to Folklore's twin laws. On April 25, 1885, the eighty year old Gayarré gave an address at Tulane entitled "The Creoles of History and the Creoles of Romance" within which he gives a "meticulous account of the term *Creole* . . . with constant reaffirmation of the 'pure white' blood of all those entitled to the name" (Tregle180). However, it was widely known that Gayarré

“had himself fathered a child in 1825 by a free woman of color” according to Gayarré’s biographer, Edward M. Socola (Tregle 181).

In 1886, the Creoles formed a society in order to come to the “Mutual Aid, Assistance, and Protection” of their culture (Tregle 182), and Vice President Charles Villère declared that they were fighting for their survival and warned that their hold on their region was slipping away. The land that they loved and had invested so much was no longer theirs. Even when Villère cried “This is our soil. We are in the house of our fathers,” it was too late (Tregle 182). Leona describes in “*Silhouettes Créoles*” how the period of the Creoles was “gone forever,” and the new cry was not from the Creoles, but from the Americans. She says that the Americans have appropriated their land, declaring that “this is now more our country!”

When Gayarré wrote “Creoles of History and Creoles of Romance”—which solidified the historical myth—he was mounting a counter-narrative that served as an antithesis to Cable. Oddly enough, both men were romanticizing the identity of the Creole—painting the culture with one brush—the sepia tones of past remembrances, which in any pursuit of truth is flawed because it attempts to describe an entire culture as homogeneous. Viewed through the prejudicial lens of recent reflection and un-tethered from the influence of close chronological proximity, neither version is a complete and accurate representation of the Creole. The diversity of the Queyrouze salon serves as evidence that the Creoles were not homogeneous, even if they were often united in the common cause of group preservation, battling for the rights to impose their story over Cables’ representation.

Until Woodward's 1951 *Origins of the New South*, most historians upheld Cable's perspective of the Creoles, but new historicists see a more complex *mosaïque*. Most would agree, however, that the elite Creoles were attempting to save the vestiges of their separate identity and that they were fighting a losing battle. Tregle shows that "the Creoles had clearly lost" long before their battle with Cable. In fact they had lost their claim by 1860, even before the "first generation born after the Purchase came into maturity, young men such as the historian Charles Gayarré, the playwright-editor-impresario Placide Canonge, the linguist Alexander Dimitry, the physician Armand Mercier and the priest-poet Adrien Rouquette" (Tregle 156). When Gayarré died in his home on North Prieur on February 11, 1895 there were few left to mark his passing, save his closest friends, Leona among them. Grace King also attended his funeral and remarked in a letter on February 17, 1895 that when the funeral procession entered the cathedral, "there were many candles lighting the church, but the mourners were not there" (Tregle 185). The battle he had waged as a spokesperson for his culture had been in vain, and there were few left to mourn the loss. Even with his volumes of history, Gayarré was no match for the power of Cable's realistic fiction.

In defending their culture, the Creoles shared a similar belief system and a common goal, and this served to strengthen their cultural bonds as a folk group. The criteria for membership to this group was a belief in the superiority of French culture and a commitment to its preservation, absolute fealty to group members, active participation in social, cultural, and literary pursuits, and a shared sense of victimization and struggle. As a member of this group, Leona adhered to these culturally-derived traditions, and explicit and implied socially-constructed criteria. For example, in her "*Silhouette*

Créoles” she listed the sterling characteristics of the French Creoles, such as their “kindness,” “generosity,” and “bravery,” and she rushed to the defense of those in her group, specifically Beauregard and Gayarré, in a manner that was quixotic. Her patronage of cultural productions, such as those presented at the French Opera House, and her literary contributions to *L’Abeille*, *Compte -Rendus*, and other local publications indicated her support of her culture through active participation. She perceived her role to be the defender of “sacred traditions” that had been brought from her “homeland,” ones that were endangered by the Americanization of her region, and she joined Gayarré in defending against the perceived assault mounted by Cable. When she dedicated her poem to Canonge, she referred to her failed cause, admitting that “at one time we believed that nothing could affect us,” which spoke to the shared sense of victimization and loss.

The Creoles knew that they were fighting a losing battle even as they pursued their dream of conservation; thus, their work can be viewed as a reaction manifested by a self-constructed world. Jameson describes this type of dynamic as a “symbolic act” that “begins by generating and producing its own context in the same moment of emergence.” He uses as an example, Burke’s “dream” as a means of “doing something to the world” and asserts that “the literary work or cultural object . . . brings into being that very situation to which it is also at one and the same time, a reaction,” indeed, the very “project of transformation” (81-2) that I align with the laws of folklore. The Creoles were attempting to resist change at the same moment that they were striving to transform the historical accounts that were emerging. Perceiving the historical narrative as still fluid, they concentrated their efforts on incorporating their own accounts. Jameson would describe this as an “oppositional culture” that used strategies to “contest and undermine

the dominant 'value system,'” in order to legitimize its own, and that the “dialogue of class struggle” is “essentially an *antagonistic* one” (84). In the end, the Creoles lost this class struggle, and they found the fault, not within their own ranks, but within the dominant American culture.

CHAPTER FIVE: POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONFLICT

Republicanism, Democracy, and similar words conveying a wide sense of freedom flatter our instinct of independenceMan fights with the most fervent enthusiasm for what he understands the least. There have been apostles and martyrs for all opinions and creeds. Error and truth alike have altars and victims Words and their interpretation have armed man against his Kind and Kin Diversity of interest violently divides a nation and breeds civil war —“Patriotism and Wagner” Leona Queyrrouze

Queyrrouze was born the same year that the Civil War began and because she grew up during this period of conflict and transformation, her life cannot be separated from the events that surrounded her. A comprehensive study of her life, therefore, must include a segment that situates her within a political context. To that end, an overview of the social and political upheaval of the region will be addressed. In this case, the historical camera lens will focus on the political scene with Queyrrouze as a peripheral figure in the composition, but one whose affiliations and political commentaries provide a personal perspective on some of these events. While many of the events leading up to the Civil War are common historical record, a brief summary that serves as a foundation will assist in understanding the political world Queyrrouze entered. This political history will be incorporated into her biography thus making its inclusion in the dissertation necessary. She was closely associated with many military and political figures. For instance, her father, Leon Queyrrouze, and his close friend, General Beauregard, served in the Confederate Army. Through Beauregard she became acquainted with Governors Nicholls and Warmoth, and through her mother's family, she claimed connections to Louisiana

state officials. (Her grandmother, Louisa Beauvais Tertrou, had a relative, Armand Beauvais, who had been president of the Louisiana Senate. When Governor Pierre Derbigny died in office, he replaced him as governor in 1829-1830). Several of Queyrouze's acquaintances were members of the Fourteenth of July Society and some were members of the White League who were involved in the Battle of September 14th in 1874. This confusing medley of associations further underscores the need to investigate the complex nature of political alliances of this era. When Queyrouze reached adulthood, she entered this political discourse, and her personal observations can add nuance to our understanding of the complexities of the public debates of the period. Overall, her political commentary is predominantly articulated in abstract terms, rather than specific issues, which simultaneously indicate, as I will demonstrate, elements of transcendent objectivity and submergent elitism.

During the sixty years prior to her birth in 1861, the Democratic Party dominated the political landscape, and they were what we would consider today in modern nomenclature as "conservative." Before the war (and after), elections in New Orleans were often rife with fraud and corruption, whether it was the Whigs, Democrats, or Know Nothings, but overall the Creoles usually favored the Democrats and voted to secede. However, many people in New Orleans did not want to secede from the Union because they were loyalists, but this may have been influenced by the fact that they lived in a port city, and if they could not trade with the states in the Midwest, their economy would crumble.

The night before New Orleans fell to the Union, several dry docks were sunk and steamboats set on fire; many state and city government documents were moved, and the

governor and other officials abandoned the city. After the city fell to Farragut, General Benjamin Butler took over as military commander (with 18,000 troops) for seven months. During his tenure, he required the citizens to sign an amnesty oath in order to keep their property. It was during this time that Leona's father, who refused to sign the oath, fled to Havana, Cuba and then later to Matamoras on the border of Mexico to serve as an advisor under General Mejia. Like many other wealthy citizens of New Orleans, Clara Queyrouze, more than likely, took Leona and left for their plantation near St. Martinville. Leon eventually returned and signed the oath on August 22, 1865. Others, such as the councilmen in New Orleans, were forced to sign the oath. In *A Confederate Girls Diary* (1913) Sarah Morgan Dawson from Baton Rouge describes some of the emotions many must have felt when they were forced to sign the oath. When Dawson entered New Orleans and arrived at a canal at Hickock's Landing she saw twenty soldiers whom she described as "the animal now so long unseen, the Yankee" (De Caro 263). When the same soldier pressed her mother to pledge the oath, she objected saying, "I have three sons fighting against you, and you have robbed me, beggared me!" (265).

While this incident describes mild resistance, many citizens of New Orleans had not been so circumspect. As a result of the treatment of his soldiers, on May 15, 1862, General Butler issued the General Order No 28 directed to the women of the city:

when any female shall, by word, gesture, or movements, insult or show contempt for any officer or soldier of the United States, she shall be regarded and held liable to be treated as a woman of the town plying her avocation.

As one can imagine, this insult was never forgiven. C. Vann Woodward relates that the Southern resistance to the Reconstruction was "open, defiant, organized and

effective. White southerners repeatedly insulted, persecuted and sometimes murdered Federal officials, army officers included” (194). Although Butler treated the citizens well in some areas, such as attending to the needs of public works and provisions, he nevertheless took advantage of the Second Confiscation Act of 1862 to seize property from those who refused to sign the Amnesty Oath. In effect, this encouraged many Northerners to come south to take advantage of the situation, for they could buy the confiscated property on the cheap and sell it for a handsome profit.

Butler was replaced by General Nathaniel P. Banks who tried to handle the growing animosity with more diplomacy, but in the face of the continued defiance, he eventually had to take a more intractable stance as had his predecessor. In 1862 The Homestead Act was passed, and between 1862 and 1878, “more than half the total area of the nation” was made available, beginning the “great era of public land distribution by the federal government,” but in effect, most went to the railroads and speculators, and only the poorest land went to individual families (Woodward 191-192). Worst of all, the new promise of freedom and equality that the Civil War and Reconstruction had offered black people began to become a nightmare instead. Bell explains:

With Lincoln’s assassination in April 1865, Johnson assumed the presidency with an entirely new set of political objectives [and . . .] entered into secret negotiations with northern Democratic leaders and moved to reconstitute the southern wing of his old party by restoring the planter elite to political and economic dominance In his Amnesty Oath Proclamation of May 29, 1865, the new president offered full pardons with restoration of confiscated lands to all former Confederates who would take the oath of allegiance to the national government (150).

The subsequent U.S. administrations took measures to achieve political synchronicity with white southerners, and in doing so, essentially abandoned the newly freed slaves. There are some notable exceptions, and one was the Freedmen's Bureau.

John C. Rodrigue describes their contribution:

Freedmen's Bureau agents were neither passive spectators nor objective mediators. Instead, they played an active role in free labor's development by working to secure a legitimate free market in labor, seeing that freedmen enjoyed the rights of free workers, and intervening on freedmen's behalf when employers tried to cheat them or intimidate them with threats and violence (194).

While it is true that the Freedmen's Bureau "played a central role in the development of the free-labor system that came to prevail in the Louisiana sugar region" (211), it failed in other areas. When the Bureau's forty-acres program was dismantled, President Johnson's "drive to guarantee white dominance in the state's internal affairs was nearly complete" (Bell 153). Bell believes that the Bureau "helped to sustain the prevailing system of black economic subservience" and that the years of "compulsory yearly contracts, fixed minimal wages, and a repressive pass system prepared the way for failure" (153).

The War and Reconstruction period lasted fourteen years, the longest of any other state in the South, and it affected Louisiana adversely, perhaps more so than any other state, in spite of the fact that during the opening years of Reconstruction, Louisiana had garnered a large share of federal funds for public works. Unfortunately, Louisiana had been "the most unlucky of all States" (Hair 14) because of the extent of the corruption and the animosity. Ted Tunnel notes that the "North reconstructed Louisiana not once, or

twice, but three times . . . nowhere did the length and complexity of events surpass the Louisiana experience” (2). New Orleans was deeply affected economically, for its trade with Europe and particularly with France and England was impeded by the cotton embargo.

Reconstruction affected the Creoles of New Orleans, not only economically, but socially, as well. The social impact revolved around their ethnic identity. Tunnel describes some of these effects:

Radical reconstruction raised vital issues that cut across the entire political economy of Louisiana and the South. The crux of the matter, however, was a question of cultural identity. The Reconstruction Acts, the Louisiana Constitution of 1868, and the laws of the Radical legislation defined Louisiana as a biracial society belonging to white and black alike. Louisiana whites at every social level recoiled in horror (5).

The Creole resistance to these changes may have been spurred by the fact that New Orleans had long been comprised of a tripartite social structure and Reconstruction re-drew those lines into white and black. Fearing a loss of authority, the Creoles quickly aligned themselves with those in power, but many feared the sweeping changes that the new federal and state legislation would bring. In 1867, the Reconstruction Acts were passed; the fourteen Amendment was ratified in 1868, and the fifteenth Amendment in 1870. In 1868, the Louisiana constitution desegregated education, prohibited racial discrimination, and eliminated French language schools. This same year, the Louisiana Lottery Company was started, and Henry Clay Warmoth of Illinois became governor. A complicated figure, Warmoth was a masterful politician who won both admiration and condemnation. While he stood for “universal suffrage and loyal government” (Tunnel

152), he was also characterized as “‘the great stumbling block’ to Negro rights in the state” (169). Overall, he was a complex and powerful political figure.

The Creoles, who feared the loss of privilege caused by associations with the disfranchised, took measures to align themselves with those in power in the hopes that they could re-stabilize and recover some of their way of life. Through their associations with conservative whites, they hoped to achieve some distance from Blacks who were targeted as the cause of the rift between the North and the South.

In New Orleans, The Crescent City White League was formed in 1874, and Tregle describes this group as one with a “predictable consequences of violence” (172). The mouthpiece for this organization was the white supremacist newspaper, the *Carillon* that declared “‘we must be either White or Black” (172). As expected, violence broke out on September 14, 1874. Young and old alike met on Canal Street under Henry Clay’s statue to meet with General Frederick N. Ogden, and according to Joy Jackson, whatever their political allegiance had been prior to the war, they felt a sense of unity under the White League and its conservative sentiments, even if for a short time (30). The clash that ensued became known as the “Battle of Liberty Place” (Tregle 172), a failed attempt to take over the government.

In January 1877, Francis Tíllou Nicholls (an ex-confederate who had lost his left arm and leg during the war) was elected governor and served for two years (he was re-elected and served a second term from 1888-1892). Louisiana agreed not to contest the Rutherford B. Hayes election in exchange for their right to elect their own governor without the strong-arming of Federal troops. This concession regarding electoral votes was known as the Compromise of 1877, resulting in the “New Departure.” Hayes hoped

for good will between the Northern Republicans and the Southern Democrats who currently served in Congress. He looked forward to an era of peace between the races and political parties, declaring that “the party of Lincoln and Grant was no longer hostile to the South” (Hair 16). He hoped that the “New Departure” Republicans would be favored by blacks because this party had freed them, and he anticipated that the wealthy southerners would support the party because they wanted to be associated with a party that was favorable to the interests of “property and privilege” (Hair 17). However, the problem of realizing this vision for Louisiana was twofold: First, Louisiana had experienced Reconstruction the longest, and its scars were still deep and visible; Second, Louisiana was composed of such diverse cultural, racial, and political elements that this optimistic outlook was unrealistic. In the New Orleans area alone, the economy steeply declined, especially in the last three years of federal control. Still suffering from the losses of property and wealth, many favored a traditional approach that would restore much of what they had lost. Often, political allegiances divided the population into demarcated factions, but for several years after Nicholls was elected governor in 1877, the state leadership lacked a “liberal” element, and the Louisiana’s Democratic party was “divided into three major factions.” There were “the patrician (or *noblesse oblige*) conservatives, the Bourbon reactionaries, and the Lottery-New Orleans machine interests. There was no really liberal faction (Hair 21-22).

Because Nicholls did not wholeheartedly endorse their political ideology, the Bourbons did not consider him one of their own, and they systematically schemed to discredit him and remove support from him. The Bourbons rejected anyone who did not

serve to uphold “true” Southern ideals of white supremacy, but they did not consider themselves patrician, either. Bourbons “embraced the sort of Negrophobia which elsewhere was usually attributed to ignorant poor whites” (Hair 24), and they blamed blacks for the “scourge” of Reconstruction. They also lobbied for the interests of the Lottery. While the Bourbons opposed the Lottery at first, they subsequently supported it for its capacity to fund their political interests. Hence, the Lottery-Bourbon Alliance was created.

The years following the end of Reconstruction were fraught with political intrigue and subterfuge. The 1879 Redeemer constitution was essentially written by the Bourbon-Lottery forces. At one point they considered re-addressing the question of voting rights, but fearing that more blacks would leave the state and further depress their agricultural economy, they tabled the issue. The seat of government was moved back to Baton Rouge where it had been prior to the war. More significant was the increase in power awarded the governor and the decrease in power afforded the legislature. Nicholls’ term, as well as those of other state officeholders, was effectively shortened by one year. Wiltz was elected governor, and with him came “radical law and patrician conservatism” (Hair 99). This was a time period (1880-1890) that Hair describes as rife with a “melancholy pattern of social neglect” (120). The money that was supposed to go to the schools and teachers was pilfered away through misappropriation and poor accounting, and the common person in Louisiana became the most under-educated in the nation; in fact, many were illiterate. The “Populist reformers in the 1890’s [felt] that the Bourbon Democrats deliberately sabotaged Louisiana’s school system . . . to keep rural people of both races docile and ignorant” (Hair 124). The Lottery, however, was very profitable for

the Bourbons, and they used well known Creoles—one a member of the Queyrouze salon-- to give the Lottery a sense of respectability.

Monthly drawings, which were presided over by Confederate luminaries General P.G.T. Beauregard and General Jubal A. Early, attracted more attention than the daily drawings and were held in theatrical settings . . . General Beauregard, dressed in a dark suit was . . . dignified, of handsome military bearing [with . . .] “immaculate linen wristbands done over his hands”—a gesture of preciseness and perhaps aloofness (Jackson 113-114).

In 1892, the state voted on whether or not to continue the lottery drawings. At the time, the Populist movement was gaining strength, and the Bourbon faction was now characterizing their platform as one that sought to educate the people of Louisiana, using Lottery money, of course. This must have proved to be a challenging time for many Creoles who were forced to make difficult choices. On the one hand, the Lottery supported many enterprises, including mills and banks, and it supported the “French opera House, the rendezvous of the city’s society set” (Jackson 121-122). However, this brought them into alliances with certain political figures that they would have scorned just a few decades before. Thus it would seem that necessity and dignity were not always easy companions.

Towards the close of the century, with the conservative political factions in place, the repression of blacks increased rather than abated. In 1898, the “separate but equal” disfranchising statute was incorporated into the state constitution, which denied blacks the rights to public accommodations and eventually the right to vote because of language in the “grandfather clause” (Tregle 183). As a requirement to vote, one had to demonstrate the ability to read and write *or* own property worth over \$300.00. However,

if one had voted prior to 1867 or had a “father or grandfather who had voted, [this person was] exempt for the above requirements” (Hair 276). In effect, this excluded the black voter.

On the local level, New Orleans was dealing with the changes in the state laws as well as wrestling with local issues. The eighteen-year-old Queyrouze witnessed many challenges facing her city. New Orleans tackled the issues of a shifting social structure, fractious local politics, and problems of sanitation and disease. However, there was progress as well. The “completion of the jetties at the mouth of the Mississippi River by engineer/captain James B. Eads in 1879 deepened the passes into the Gulf and opened the river to larger, oceangoing vessels” (Jackson 4-5). That same year Southern University was established for blacks. In December of 1884, New Orleans held the Cotton Centennial Exposition where Queyrouze’s Symphony “*Fantaise Indienne*” was played by the Mexican Army Band. Local citizens formed groups between the years 1884 and 1888, such groups as the Committee of One Hundred, The Law and Order League, and the Young Men’s Democratic Association who monitored the polling places to assure a fair election. Queyrouze’s brother, Maxim, was a member of this Association.

In spite of the attempts of these organizations to deal with fraud and corruption, in 1890, New Orleans earned international notoriety when the Police chief of New Orleans, David C. Hennessy, was murdered, and the Italian Mafia was accused. Hennessy had been shot several times on October 15, 1890 on Basin Street, but before he died he told investigators that the men who had run off after the shooting were Italians. On March 1, 1891, nine Italian men were put on trial for organizing and executing the murder. Several were acquitted. Two weeks later, however, while legal proceeding were still underway, a

mob of vigilantes stormed the Parish Prison (located at the site for present day Armstrong Park), and nine Italians were shot and two were hanged. Those who condoned such violence felt justified because they believed that the legal system was incapable of convicting the men due to jury tampering. Most deplored the brutal lawlessness, and in her correspondence, Queyrouze sympathized with the Italians. This incident made international headlines, and embarrassed and shocked, President Benjamin Harrison paid restitution to the Italian government.

Queyrouze wrote letters about this incident, and received a response from Ione Perry of Paris, France and David Marx of Cincinnati, Ohio, among others.

Marx writes to her on April 15th, 1891:

I was sorry to hear of the late trouble in New Orleans, for although I see the necessity of some action being necessary to strike terror into the hearts of the dreaded and dreadful Mafia, yet I always hate to hear of peaceful citizens having recourse to such procedure [UU-68 2:17].

Perry writes to Leona on May 26, 1891:

You did not say in your letter what sort of men these Italians were, but I infer from your sympathy for them that they were innocent harmless men. Their only fault—if it could be called such, was to kill the Chief of police, known to be an assassin together with his father and all his family, consequently having many enemies. What surprises me immensely is that a man with such a record & so much hated, should through his violent death (even making allowance for the influence of the leaders of the ignorance and prejudices of the populous) aroused 30,000 men to avenge his murder on eleven poor Italians; and also that the instigators in this . . . shocking violence to law & justice should have been men of good social standing . . . I cannot think that the U.S. government with all its many faults, still the best the world has yet known, would allow anarchy to prevail . . . It was kind of you my beloved Leona to give me so full an account. I read it with much interest fearful as it was & I could sympathize how deeply you felt the disgrace that came upon your native city [UU-68 2:17].

In her poem, “A *Magda*,” translated by Norman R. Shapiro in *Creole Echoes*, she responds to this incident:

Then will you see those bronze and granite shades
Quake at your words, and tears, in flame cascades,
Flow from their eyes. When you tell them the fell,
Foul carnage wrought, up will rise one and all!
But when you say it was their sons, pell-mell,
Who twisted taut the springs, down will they fall!

Queyrouze “A *Magda*” May 20, 1891
Tr. Norman Shapiro (*Creole Echoes* 145).

Shapiro notes that “the accused had been acquitted, but it was widely known that Mafia money had ‘bought’ the jury None of the vigilantes was ever arrested or charged” (147).

There were other problems in the city as well. In 1889, the New Orleans school enrollment was only “25,649 out of a potential 69,131 of school age. The average daily attendance was 15,761 and the school year lasted only six months” (Jackson 200). The cracks in the education system were mirrored in the fissures in New Orleans infrastructure. In 1890, the Mississippi River overflowed and flooded many areas, resulting in cracks in the levees. The Great Depression of the 1890s affected sugar and cotton process, and cotton hit an all time low in 1894—just ten years after the Exposition.

These important events in national, state, and local history will serve as an infrastructure for the Queyrouze biography, and to demonstrably situate Queyrouze into this landscape, I will incorporate some of her commentaries. In reviewing them, I have arrived at a conflicted portrait of Queyrouze, which is a confusing medley of alliances and sentiments. There are several areas where her affiliations and personal views are at odds.

For instance, as the director of the French school, she would have had ties with the Fourteenth of July Society that selected her for the position, but this society was known for its white supremacist ideology. While this connection does not necessarily prove that Queyrouze endorsed a supremacist attitude, it is logical to assume that many, if not all, individuals of privilege in this time period harbored racist and elitist attitudes to varying degrees. The fact that this school was created solely for the purpose of educating white French Creole boys, speaks to an assumption of gender privilege, ethnic classism and elitism.

In another case, she was sufficiently acquainted with Governor Nicholls to receive a letter of presentation from him on March 17, 1895 recommending her to General M. Ransom of Mexico City. If political associations translate into personal ideology—which is certainly not always the case-- then Queyrouze’s connection to Nicholls might indicate a position of moderation. This is corroborated by the fact that her essays and articles do not support the Bourbons, nor do they uphold the “true” southern ideals of white supremacy or cast blame on the blacks for Reconstruction. Instead, her articles support education for blacks.

Her connection with Henry Clay Warmoth, however, is complicated. He has been characterized as a defender of egalitarian reform yet has also been accused of repressing radical reform. While Warmoth had been endorsed by the black radicals in 1865, he proved to be obstructive to their aims (Baggett 142). In “Une Chimère” Caryn Cossé Bell lists some of these:

[Warmoth] stymied civil-rights legislation, resisted desegregation of the public schools, opposed enforcement of the constitution's equal accommodations provision, appointed white Democrats to political office, and accumulated a personal fortune by exacting tribute from railroad companies (155).

In spite of this, Warmoth is also credited with putting black politicians in office during his term as governor. Perhaps, then, like many individuals during this turbulent era, his ideologies were as complicated as the issues he faced. Years later, when Warmoth introduced Queyrouze to Powell Clayton, a foreign minister, this suggests a close association or connection, but this is only conjecture.

This confusion of associations and loyalties is further evidenced by her stand on the Lottery. Beauregard and Early oversaw these drawings, and Queyrouze's connection to Beauregard might suggest her support, especially as she consistently demonstrated unflinching loyalty to those in her salon. Moreover, the profits from the gaming supported her beloved French Opera House. However, in 1890, she was working for George C. Preot, an attorney in New Orleans, translating pamphlets into French for the Anti-Lottery League. Perhaps her work for Preot was less political and more pragmatic; despite political affiliations, providing for her own financial support proved to be a more pressing need, or perhaps her loyalty to Beauregard was actualized by her tactful silence. In this case, we are left with as many questions as we have answers.

Her positions on political and social issues are more clearly indicated in her 1890 letters to James Redpath whose political positions were as complex as Queyrouze's. Born in England in 1833, his family immigrated to the U.S. in 1849 and at age nineteen he became a correspondent for the *New York Tribune*. During his tenure at the *Tribune*, he journeyed through the South to witness first-hand the conditions of slavery, and he

became a fervent abolitionist. Later, he befriended John Brown and wrote his biography, portraying him as a martyr in the cause for freedom. When Queyrouze corresponded with him he was the editor of the *North American Review*. Ironically, he was working on a memoir for Jefferson Davis whom he had come to know very well. This contradictory mixture of political allegiances is not unlike those sometimes expressed by Queyrouze as well.

Much can be gleaned from Queyrouze's letters to Redpath. Apparently they were having a debate about the character of Beauregard, Jefferson Davis, and General Johnston, and they were connecting current events to the fall of the Roman Empire. On July 18, 1890 she attacked Redpath's conclusion that Davis had the "utmost contempt for that frivolous little Frenchman Beauregard." She criticizes Davis, saying that a person who "scatters his opinions, words & manuscripts to the four winds, really speaks confidently to no one" and defends Beauregard, citing his integrity. Comparing their discussion to the senators in ancient Rome, she reminds Redpath that "To destroy is a far easier task than to create. Hence, in social matters, the number of demolishers and the scarcity of architects." Her comments suggest rancor against those who would demolish a Latin cultural architecture—an allusion to Rome as well as her own transplanted culture.

More significantly, she takes issue with Redpath's defense of "the birthright of free speech" by arguing that "all rights are limited, & if not they degenerate into license & abuse" [UU-68 2:17]. For a writer who defends the rights of freedom in her published essays, Queyrouze private observations about the limitations of free speech is revealing, thus raising these questions: if free speech is to be limited, who has the authority to do so? Are her comments inspired by the bust of Plato gracing her parlor mantle? Perhaps

she is alluding to the Platonic idea that “there will be no end to the troubles of states, or of humanity itself, till philosophers become kings in this world” (Stevenson 473). Or does she reveal her elitism and classism? Perhaps, the answer is both.

In a letter to Redpath ten days later on July 28, 1890, she continues her debate, comparing the rulers of the Roman Empire to the current situation in France and Germany. She says that she has the “utmost contempt & horror for useless violence. It is a luxury which always has to be paid at usury rates,” and she cannot “find any excuse . . . [for] aimless fury.” She states that she “abhor[s] extremes, unless they become necessary, & they can only be so for a short while. On the one hand, she deplores the cost of violence, yet she does not define all violence in the same way. Her quarrel addresses only “useless” or aimless” violence, which gives tacit approval to violence with a useful purpose.

More troubling still is her reference to “the people, or rather the plebs [who] are a force which should be controlled, & not for a second should it be let loose.” Privileging her class and education, she makes the judgment that the “ignorant, untutored plebian is a dangerous element. He must be taught to discern first [however. . .] the vulgar . . . are irresponsible & worthy of pity.” Once again, she assumes the role of the philosopher king who makes judgments for those who are “beneath” her. Her harshest criticism is reserved for “those who take advantage of the people’s ignorance, simplicity, & passions & lead them astray to serve their own selfish aims. They are “those who should be hung, shot or beheaded; in fact suppressed” [UU-68 2:17]. These comments correspond to many issues of her era—ones in which she sees that uneducated people are incited to fervor without reason, that others makes uninformed and misguided assumptions about her own culture,

and that unethical politicians use others to achieve their own self-serving goals. In every case, she positions herself “above” others to make assessments and judgments.

In her comments to Redpath, she makes direct references to class issues, and she doubts that “Radicalism” reform will have any effect, for “it shall always stand beyond its power to abolish classes & castes. On one hand there will ever be manual labor, on the other the mental intellectual work; the eternal balance of humanity. Physical strength in one scale & spiritual power in the other, science above & ignorance below” and she implies that her role and her class position (involved in intellectual, spiritual, and scientific work) grants her the right to judge. These comments undermine the substance of her newspapers articles calling for egalitarian reform achieved through education.

While Queyrouze does assume an elitist and classist stance, in her defense, I must add that many philosophers, scholars, theorists, scholars, essayists, novelists, and poets have presumed to speak from positions of leisure and wealth, and in response to their impulses of *noblesse oblige*, used their talents to address political and social conflict. The key to understanding Queyrouze’s political position is to consider that she is attempting to view politics less particularly and more abstractly. While she does address, at times, particular events, she places these events into the scheme of world history—trying to place the pieces into the whole pattern to see what the *mosaïque* will ultimately reveal. She warns Redpath that “we should not rashly judge the past with our modern ideas, then unknown.”

In her closing remarks she describes her role as “the chieftain of a lost cause, lost beyond hope” a reference to her task of culture preservation, and she tells Redpath that she will conduct herself “like the Roman senators.” When she refers to the “lost cause” in

Queyrrouze's stoicism is given form in her poem, "Atlas" written in 1901:

Many writers during this time period attempted to affect social and political change through public commentary, as did Queyrouze in her speech, “Patriotism and Progress.” Throughout, she does not address politics in particular as much as she is concerned with the abstract nature of patriotism. Although her comments were prompted by a controversy over the defacement of Wagner’s statue in France, her sentiments about patriotism are nationalistic, and there appears to be many coded references to the Civil War and its aftermath:

the real substance of patriotism, that lofty ideal in the name of which so many noble deeds are performed, and an equal number of follies committed. We are not sufficiently exacting in regard to truth, and we rest content with an orchestra of well sounding words, echoed from age to age by tradition, which has consecrated them, and implying an indefinite sense of sublimity. We forget that the word is merely a shell that must be broken to disclose its kernel which is the idea.

Patriotism originates in the instinct of possession or property, of which it is an expansion, and which is inborn in all beings for the satisfaction of the requirements of existence, and the preservation of what is theirs. It has been ennobled by our imaginations, converted into a virtue, and inculcated as a duty . . .

. It is a variety of self-interest, and is derived from egoism . . . Patriotism in its most extensive sense, is no less conventional than the sentiments of parental and filial affection, both born of the natural principle of mutuality, which is an indispensable agent of preservation and in virtue of which protection is requested and granted. From that principle proceed the necessary union and solidarity which constitute first, the family and next, the country. Compliance with this necessity is confirmed by custom, and develops into a virtue . . . Patriotism is relative . . .

. We who are a recent nation, the result of a fusion of heterogeneous elements, and are therefore subject to the divergent effects of hereditariness, according to races, we can appreciate more distinctly the relativity of patriotism [UU-70 3:47].

When she makes references to the “heterogeneous elements” of a “recent nation,” she describes America, and when she applies “race” to patriotism, she defends her subjective notion of patriotism. Based upon the concepts of family, property, and self-interest, she argues that patriotism is not a virtue; therefore, she can rationalize not only the French Creole resistance to Americanization, but the South’s resistance to Union allegiance.

The notion of Freedom is suspect as well. Freedom, she says, is in many cases an illusion: “Republicanism, Democracy, and similar words conveying a wide sense of freedom, flatter our instinct of independence;” However, “the ideal of liberty as in all ideals, one half is dream and delusion, dissipated by the slightest breath of reality.” In fact, freedom without discipline is dangerous, for if “liberty [is] entrusted to irrational and undisciplined judgments, [it] is transformed to tyranny.” If we do not acknowledge this,

then we forge the weapon of our own demise for “Ignorance is of all foes the most murderous; of all weapons the most destructive, and in the hands of our countrymen, its wounds become suicidal.”

Furthermore, she warns that “the most noxious consequences are often generated by the noblest sentiments . . . in the name of patriotism.” Suspicious of the unthinking mob mentality that follows idealistic rhetoric without understanding its source and meaning, she observes that “the majority follow in a herd and howl without knowing exactly why.” The ideological underpinning of patriotism should not be based on emotion, nor should our “notions of right and wrong [be] mainly dependent on feeling . . . We should distrust personal impressions and experiences, and not convert them into dogmas.” Before we declare that our actions are based on the pure ideal of patriotism, we must consider that even the most laudable and meritorious deeds do not satisfactorily demonstrate the purity of their origin.” Blind patriotism is not a noble state, for “Men fight with the most fervent enthusiasm for what he understands the least. There have been apostles and martyrs for all opinions and creeds. Error and truth alike have altars and victims.”

She also addresses the issue of Power, likening it to a ship at sea: “Power is a dangerous vessel to steer, even in the comparatively tranquil waters of knowledge,” and she believes that it is “inexcusable” that “enlightened men should knowingly excite and lead astray the dupes of ignorance.” Whom we call a patriot or a traitor lies often in interpretation. This further rationalizes her resistance to ideologies that are not in synch with her loyalties to French Creole culture and southern traditions. She develops this further by saying that all is relative, even that which we deem evil:

Evil is often nothing else but the exaggeration of good; injustice of right; and the wrong may also lie in the interpretation, things being mostly what interpretation makes them Words and their interpretations have armed man against his Kind and Kin, and furnished a large tribute to the executioner Souls are not conquered by bloodshed or money like lands; and no torrents of blood, however mighty, can ever drown patriotism. . . . Our enemies make us great; by their attacks, they reveal to us mines of energy until then hidden in our soul, and unsuspected even by ourselves [UU-70 3:47].

In offering this argument, she legitimizes the resistance to the flood of changes brought about by the Civil War and Reconstruction. When she states that “souls are not conquered,” she could be alluding to her own culture or to the South, and she finds comfort by declaring that “our enemies make us great.”

Even though she retreats to an antagonistic position, her attempt to achieve a semblance of abstract disinterest is laudable because it is a prerequisite to understanding the panorama and scope of history. Striving to find a place for each piece into the larger scheme of the *mosaïque*, she makes a concerted effort to describe her vision of power and patriotism, and while she was understandably trapped within the social orthodoxy of her time, her attempts to transcend it deserve recognition.

One cannot speak of Louisiana and politics without a specific focus on the social conflict in the South, and because this central issue informed much of the political debate and motivated most of the partisan machinery, a discussion of this is essential to any research project covering this era. I approach this subject with some caution, however, and will attempt this in the same manner of Ted Tunnel who says: “Harboring no delusions of definitiveness, I have addressed all of these questions and suggested

answers” (7). I will use the term *race* as it was understood at the end of the nineteenth century, for at that time, individuals often identified themselves by their genealogy, and used such terms as *Latin, Gallic, Anglo-Saxon, Negro, French, American, black, white, gen de couleur, mulatto, quadroon*, etc. Thus, when I use the term *race* it is to describe the differences that individuals perceived in one another at that time, often dependant on perceptions of “blood” or “color.”

In many ways, New Orleans was unique in its race relations until the advent of the Civil War because its social divisions were based on property and prestige as well as color. Where there had once been a three-part social structure, there was now a racial division between black and white. This distinction had far-reaching effects on the white Creoles, the *gens de couleur*, and former slaves. The white French Creoles found themselves defining their position within this new social order.

In *Black New Orleans* John Blassingame describes the “truly unique features in the Negro community” in New Orleans and believes that the reason their situation was different from other southern cities was due to “location in the most ‘non-American’ of American cities” (xvi). As an example, it was customary for “upper class whites” [. . . to hire] free Negro men to teach their daughters music; [. . . They] dined with blacks, and also attended public functions with Negroes. Interracial social functions” were commonplace (17). Furthermore, “the style of life of the Negro upper-middle and upper class was comparable to that of the same classes among whites” (159). Even after the Civil War, vestiges of this social system persisted; it was one that based on culture rather than color: “The free mulatto was French in thought, language, and culture while the black freedman was English-speaking and Afro-American in culture” (155). Logsdon and

Hirsch describe how this situation changed after the war when a different structure emerged: a “two-tiered structure that drew a single unyielding line between the white and nonwhite” (189). The division became one of biology rather than culture (190). Before this, there had been a “curious co-existence of a three-tiered Caribbean racial structure along side its two-tiered American counterpart in an ethnically divided city” (189). The “contact between immigrants and blacks,” Hirsch and Logsdon continue, “was frequent and close in New Orleans’ congested neighborhoods, and a one dimensional portrait of unrelieved tension does not do justice to the complexity of the situation” (190). Logsdon and Caryn Cossé Bell state that the “consummate linkage of negritude and servility, the dominant feature of racial relations in the America’s Old South, never fully emerged in colonial Louisiana” (214), and that the “racial order remained fluid during most of the antebellum” period (218). At that time, the differences among the races were “ethnocultural . . . not simply color or legal status” (193), and people in the city lived according to their means more than their ethnic background. This is not to say that the *gens de couleur* did not suffer from discrimination, but they enjoyed liberties not known in other areas of the South. Tunnell explains:

[They] owned real and personal property (including slaves), contracted legal marriages, testified against whites in courts of law, learned trades and professions, and participated in music and the arts. Their achievements rested on a solid economic base (67).

However, this ended when the people began to separate themselves along racial lines. The “disappearance of its tightly knit, clustered, multicultural neighborhoods, also meant the disintegration of the residential base that had created, nurtured and sustained

New Orleans' unique culture" (Logsdon and Bell 200). Before the separation, the people in New Orleans engaged in intimate bonds and relationships between members of different racial groups. They shared work and living quarters and often attended the Sunday services together; however, C. Vann Woodward qualifies this by conceding that "contact" did not necessarily mean "harmony" (13). My goal is to demonstrate that the issue is more convoluted than public and political oppositions would indicate. Between the conservatives (who advocated a return to the pre-war social, economic and racial order) and the radicals (who called for social and political equality) was the middle ground characterized by the *Atheneé Louisianais*, supported by Queyrouze. For her, holding onto cultural values and taking pride in her nationality, social customs, religion and heritage did not necessarily translate into intentional racism. She represents what Charles E. Wynes describes as the "forgotten voices" (5), a term coined by George Washington Cable. While Queyrouze defies a label, for the sake of discussion, I will situate her in the category of the *mosaïque*. Like any mosaic, if we look too closely, we will come to the wrong conclusion—but if we stand far enough away, we can see it in its entirety, including its patterns and flaws.

Some scholars argue that any idea of a benevolent Creole was a myth--that their lifestyle was based on the complacent, unspoken assumption of racial superiority, one that required no explanation or defense. In "Creoles and Americans" Tregle maintains that the Union presence in New Orleans after the Civil War "pushed the white Creoles into full acceptance of the racial outlook of their fellow white southerners" (Logsdon and Hirsch 97). He argues that it was not until blacks were given equal status under the law that Creoles rushed to define their separate and superior identity, even going so far as to deny

that racial mixing had ever occurred in New Orleans. Some argue that this turn to negrophobia was caused by outside pressures. Under the “white” gaze of America, the Creole felt threatened culturally and economically, and thus took a position along racial color lines. Logsdon and Hirsch argue that the white Creoles’ rush to declare racial “‘purity’ and unity . . . represented a flight from the abyss” (191). From a folklore perspective this is logical, considering Regina Bendix’s claim that the gaze from outsiders changes the object of scrutiny. There is strong evidence that this is the case and that the disintegrating situation between whites and blacks and the move towards more strident racial repression was enhanced by the overlay of American culture upon the Creole one. In any event, “Something happened . . . the South capitulated to racism” (Wynes 4). Wynes questions whether it was the “abandonment of the Negro by the Republican party [or. . .] social Darwinian naturalism, in which the Negro and all men were left to rise or fall as a result of their own efforts and general fitness” (4). He considers the Jim Crow laws to be “an accurate index of the decline of the reactionary regimes of the Redeemers and triumph of white democratic movements” and points to the “failure of the democratic agrarian revolt known as Populism [that . . .] had threatened the one-party hegemony of the Democrats, and in doing so further threatened to place the Negro in a position of holding the balance of power” (4). He explains:

. . . there was Progressivism itself. Not only were virtually all the South’s progressive political leaders white supremacists, they also sincerely believed that the only way to remove the bribery, vote buying, ballot box stuffing, etc, which had plagued the South since the Civil War was to remove the Negro from the political scene altogether” (5).

These problems not only existed in the South, they were prevalent in the North. Many believed that the North and South were clearly divided on the issue of slavery, but C. Vann Woodward argues that this is a misconception. The North and South were not polarized into two opposing camps of pro-slavery and anti-slavery, he argues; the situation was much more complicated and does not take into account the human frailties and complexities of the individuals on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line. Woodward argues that each side wanted to be “right” based upon “a laudable impulse to be identified with noble deeds” (268). Indeed, he says that “white supremacy was a national, not a regional credo” (269), and blacks suffered discrimination in the north, as well. That might explain why that “by 1860, only 6 percent of the Northern Negro population lived in the five states that provided legally for their suffrage” (270).

However, this does not mitigate the responsibility Creoles have for their own actions involving treatment of black people. While Tregle maintains that the Union presence in New Orleans after the Civil War “pushed the white Creoles into full acceptance of the racial outlook of their fellow white southerners” (Logsdon and Hirsch 97), there is evidence that racist views were already entrenched. As early as 1831 Alexis de Tocqueville “found slavery [to be] as ruthless in the remnants of French Louisiana as in the Anglo-American South” (Hirsch and Logsdon 9). Lafcadio Hearn thought that the Creoles who treated their slaves badly were just a product of their heritage—that they had a “natural Latin cruelty” (Tregle 150). Jean-Charles Houzeau of the *New Orleans Tribune* was especially scathing in his observations about the Creoles. He considered the “white Creoles pretentious, dishonest, dissolute, racist, and reactionary.” In a letter dated July 22, 1866, he writes:

[The] European quarter of New Orleans is a disgrace for a civilized city . . . where they speak French and Spanish The American city has an immense contempt for these old . . . Latin customs . . . with all the libertinage that these customs require when practiced in a distant foreign country. What a contrast with the severity of the Anglo-Saxons, who are without a doubt cold, but who control themselves . . . this Latin Society is not . . . honorable How can such a race . . . have the pretension to colonize and dominate? [. . . They are] the most cruel and rabid slaveholders—people who are never truthful nor practical. Great luxury, sumptuous clothing, debt up the their ears, all sorts of parties at night, drunkenness, swindling without shame (33).

The Creoles attempted to counteract this with the construction of their own myth regarding slavery. In fact, the *New Orleans Daily Crescent* in 1866 went so far as to state that “domestic servitude [was] very wrongfully denominated ‘African Slavery’ [and. . .] thus deprived the ‘sable race, so much falsely pitied . . . [of] their lost happy condition, under the protection of their indulgent masters and mistresses’” (Tregle 169). Rhetoric such as this indicates the degree to which the Creoles were invested in abnegating any responsibility for the inhumane institution that had supported the southern economy.

Not only did they fail to acknowledge culpability, they often used blacks as pawns in political struggles for power. In *The Future of the Past*, Woodward points out that most historical accounts are “the record of what the white man believed, thought, legislated, did and did not do *about* the Negro. The Negroes is a passive element . . . he is the object rather than the subject he had no past (35, 37). This suggests an underlying assumption of racial superiority that affected even those who were advocates of racial equality.

Plantation owners in the South had a reputation for ill treatment of slaves, and the French Creoles were no exception. One of the threats often used on recalcitrant slaves

was that they would be sent down river to plantations where slaves were treated more harshly. John Rodrigue explains that sugar plantations had a “hellish reputation among slaves of the antebellum South” (195), but this was due more to the rigorous mechanics of sugar production than to practices. Joe Gray Taylor states that “while the French planters in Louisiana did not work their slaves so hard as did the Anglo-Saxons, they did not care for them so well” (Taylor 226), while other scholars argue that the French Creoles reputation for cruelty was exaggerated.

Their reputation did not consist solely upon plantation life, for there were documented incidences in New Orleans, as well. Taylor cites one of the most notorious cases, the one regarding Madame Lalaurie of New Orleans who starved and tortured her slaves. When her crimes were discovered, an angry mob attacked her home and chased her out of town. The crowds were mostly French, and they were angry, most of all, because “she had discredited her French blood in the eyes of the Americans” (226), and as such, they felt that she had disgraced their culture. William Ivy Hair cites the cause of these cases of abuse upon “the commingling of English-speaking and Creole-Cajun cultures [that] had resulted in a milieu of political instability and unusual insensitivity to human rights” (186). Taylor, on the other hand, believes that individual cases of cruelty do not represent the entire picture and argues that the problem resided in the institution itself that “made brutality necessary” even among those “who represented highest principles” (227).

During Reconstruction and afterwards, freedmen often faced greater challenges in Louisiana than in other areas of the South. Taylor notes that “the whites in Louisiana sought, at all costs, to prevent any tendency to bring the two races to the same level”

(227). Hair separates the “upper class conservatives in the post-Reconstruction South” from those of the “ruling class in Louisiana” (Hair 186) and says that unlike the rest of the South who very paternalistically tried to take the “inferior” freedmen under their protective wing, the Louisiana elite were merely rabidly white supremacists who were fearful of the freedmen’s assertion of rights and political control. Hair cites the year 1881 as the “turning point towards extreme cruelty” (187); this was the time when there were more tortures, lynchings, and instances of inhuman cruelty--some were burned alive. *The Chicago Tribune* estimated that “between 1882 and 1903 . . . lynchings accounted for 285 deaths” (Hair 187-188), but these figures do not necessarily include all local reports. A contemporary reader would find the newspaper accounts of lynching in the 1890s extremely unsettling. These papers described lynchings as neck tie parties, and one Shreveport newspaper, the *Evening Judge*, actually used the term “beautiful” in its description of a lynching. Equally offensive was the “Shreveport Plan” that proposed blacks be given only menial and hard labor jobs because they were a “sub-human species” (Hair 191). Hostility towards blacks reached horrific levels, and those who were often the most violent were wealthy white planters who forced black landowners either to sell their land at a low price or be tortured or killed. Louisiana became notorious for this violence, and those guilty of these acts felt that they were above the law because they were united in groups with similar sentiments--many of these individual held positions of power.

In spite of these accounts, there were those who raised their voices against these atrocities. One of these was Cable, a leading proponent of racial reform. Because he was central in mounting the counter-narrative to the Creole myth, he cannot be separated from

the discussion of the Creoles and social conflict. Cable became involved in a social movement that Woodward describes as having its origin in the upper class. “In the early years of the nineteenth century, up to the time repression set in, antislavery sentiment was found in the upper class,” then, they recruited the middle class (285). Woodward points to a little known fact that “it was Southerners who launched the antislavery press in America” (286). He calls Cable’s *Silent South* published in 1885, “one of the most radical indictments of southern racial policy written by a Southerner in the eighties” (289). Laurence J. Friedman adds that Cable’s description of the maiming and torture of Bras-Coupe in the *Grandissimes* serves as a counter-narrative to the widely circulated myth of the content slave. In doing so, Cable departed from the Cavalier literary school of writers who “exalted the improvident but generous-hearted and cultivated Cavalier gentleman planter” (103).

Cable brought into question the perceptions of race. In a letter to Charles Waddell Chestnutt on June 12, 1889, Cable asked the question, “‘what is a white man, what is a white woman?’” This inquiry implies that Cable was arguing the notion of *race* itself and wrestling with the idea that all “race is transitory” (107). In addition, Cable investigated the myriad of harmful effects of slavery. In his essay, “The Freedman’s Case in Equity” published in *Century Magazine*, he declared that there was a “moral responsibility on the whole nation never to lose sight of the results of African-American slavery until they cease to work mischief and injustice The nation was to blame; and so long as evils spring from it, their correction must be a nation’s duty” (Wynes 13). When slavery was “petrified [it] became the cornerstone of the whole social structure, and when men sought its overthrow as a national evil, it first brought war upon the land” (14). Just as

Queyrouze expressed in her article in *The Crusader*, Cable felt that a future debt was being incurred and that silence would not mitigate this liability. He warned that “to commit it to the silence and concealment of a covered furrow” would mean that it would “spring up and expand once again into questions of public equity . . . questions of national interest” (14). He believed that those with an “unyielding attitude, whose strength is in the absence of intellectual and moral debate” (16) were not evil people; in fact, they were often “God-fearing people,” but just as one can see the faults of previous generations, “posterity will discover ours” (17). “Thousands of pious masters and mistresses flatly broke the shameful laws that stood between their slaves and the Bible” (18). Many who claimed “title to an American freedoms and aspirations” would “then in daily practice heap upon [blacks] in every public place the most odious distinctions,” the result of which destroyed his “ambition, trample[d] upon . . . self-respect” (23). He argues that such indignities adversely affect all, for “the first premise of American principles is that whatever elevates the lower stratum of the people lifts all the rest and whatever holds it down holds all down” (25). The “whole community is sinned against in every act or attitude of oppression, however gross or refined” (33). He warns that “slavery was a moral mistake” (36) and that the world was “waiting to see what we will write upon the white page of today’s and tomorrows’ history” (31).

In spite of this rhetoric, Cable was not completely separate from the racial orthodoxy of his time, and Friedman investigates Cable’s underlying prejudice. Friedman believes that Cable was an exception to the orthodoxy of white supremacy, but argues that even those who were sympathetic to the plight of blacks would not tolerate black assertiveness and expression of “social *dignity*” (99). Friedman asserts that it was nearly

impossible “for a white Southerner to openly and meaningfully depart from racial orthodoxy” (100). While Cable did not believe in white supremacy per se, he nevertheless felt that “most” whites were superior to “most” blacks, and that blacks could not completely overcome their savage nature. Cable’s purpose in supporting the cause for equality was also to save whites because he believed that a “repressionist policy had a ‘warping moral effect’ upon the oppressor” and that it compromised one’s Christian principles (110).

Cable’s private journals also reveal some of his hidden biases. James Robert Payne investigated Cable’s personal dairies at the Howard-Tilton Library at Tulane and found that in Cable’s revised passages and deleted lines one can discover a writer in conflict. For instance, when Cable met George Washington Williams, a mulatto who wrote *The History of the Negro Race in America* (1883), Cable wrote in his diary that he wanted Williams to join his literary circle but noted “‘I see at last a man whose only Africanism is his tawny skin’” (Diary I, 3-4) (105). Likewise, Friedman describes how Cable was patronizing to Carter G. Woodson, Booker T. Washington, and Charles Chestnutt. In one instance, Cable expressed his admiration for Chestnutt, but simultaneously revealed his patronizing and superior attitude when he considered asking Chestnutt-- a brilliant writer in his own right-- to “serve as [Cable’s] personal secretary” (114). On the other hand, many southern whites—the Creoles among them-- accused Cable of being a “Negro lover” as did “Charles Gayarré in the *New Orleans Times Democrat* on January 22, 1885 (115). This was followed by “an assault by nine Southern newspaper editors upon Cable’s ‘miscegenationist tendencies’” (115). These and many other attacks forced Cable, at last, to leave for Northampton, Massachusetts.

In any other context, Queyrouze and Cable would have not considered themselves to be kindred spirits, but in varying degrees, each experienced censure for their support of racial equality. When Queyrouze (under the *nom de plume* Salamandra or Adamas) wrote articles for the New Orleans *Crusader*, a publication directed towards a predominantly black audience, she suffered some backlash. On February 16, 1889, in an article entitled “The Race Problem Logically Discussed” Queyrouze began her discussion by saying, “never has any social or political problem given rise to more violent polemics and created more causes for dissension and bitter animosity than the race question [The] hostility [is] one that feeds on every pretext,” and she warned that the “inequity of the fathers will be visited upon the children.” The same law of heredity that applied to Nature applied to nations, for a nation is “but a magnified image of the family.” She charged that the “present troubles between the white and black races” were a result of the “grievous sin committed by our American predecessors: the importation of the Negro for bondage.” She compares the situation to a ledger:

[America is] unconsciously contracting an overwhelming debt toward mankind and posterity. The interests on the debt have accrued rapidly and constantly; and the time has almost come for the present to settle the accounts of the past. What is life, what is history, but an account current in which debit and credit must balance? And woe to him whose accounts do not balance!

But the white man of this period still deceives himself and his colored fellow-citizen, as his forefathers have done The sum of hypocrisy spent by him in contriving subterfuges, and coloring his genuine motives of enmity is incalculable. Any opportunity whatever is available as long as it may contribute the slightest chance of supporting his assumed claims to autocracy [They] wish less to become initiated to the truth than to maintain their once authoritatively expressed opinions, for vanity and exaggerated pride have a far stronger hold on man than the yearning towards justice A few think and lead and the many follow. There are numerous empty-headed beings who adopt . . . manufacture, and borrow . . . The very ones who stoutly deny the colored man the

rights that should be unreservedly his as a citizen . . . are those who have used him to their own best advantage But after extracting all the profit . . . have they not cast him off like a blunted tool? [UU-71 7:52].

In the same article she directs her argument to the black race, saying that "the colored man must no longer be a tool. He must become the hand that wields the tool and the brain that guides the hand." Not long after this article was published, Queyrouze wrote to a friend, saying that she had been accused of having "mixed blood," a charge that was commonly used to silence proponents of racial equality; ironically, this was the same tactic that the Creoles had used against Cable.

While no one can deny in the foregoing Queyrouze's passion and fervor for equal rights, she does exhibit some of the inevitable sensibilities of her era. Categorizing all black individuals into one index, she says in the same article that "the black race is naturally kind, large hearted, devoted, and not at all distrustful; therefore, *it* [emphasis added] is apt to be duped the more easily." Furthermore, she quickly asserts her own racial purity by saying that "the writer of these lines, whose ancestors were born in Louisiana for many generations, belongs to the purest type of the noble Latin and Gallic races combined, and has consequently no interest in being partial to the black race."

More troubling still is her description of some of the different people that gathered in Congo Square on Sunday afternoons. She categorizes the different "tribes" that she sees according to their value as a commodity in "*Silhouette Créoles*":

There one could see the athletic Mozambique who has large shoulders and who was distinguished from the others by the curious tattoos on his flat face and the

constellation of black cuts in his very flesh. There was the statuesque Cafres who was very tall and whose features were accentuated by his bronze complexion; Mandingue slaves were nervous . . . [and] had fine and regular black faces, and an independent spirit that made them adept at commerce, a characteristic that made them often the opposite of a good slave [They were often called] the Yankees of Negroes. The Congo, bulky, with a small build, was in demand by the purchasers of slaves because of his docility and vigor, and his wide and frank laugh in his square face . . . marked by a joy . . . The masters preferred this slave, calling him the “natural” one . . . [he had] the instinctive devotion of the dog [UU-70 6:47].

As further evidence of these conflicting sentiments, Queyrouze had a penchant for wearing a bracelet that symbolized the oppression she addressed in her article. In *Lafcadio Hearn's American Days*, Edward Larocque Tinker describes this bracelet, one immortalized in a poem by an anonymous writer. It was a “gold bangle of curious design . . . A miniature slave whip which her grandfather had given to her grandmother with the words, ‘this shall be your badge of authority’” (Tinker 264). Her preference for this symbolic bracelet counterbalances the sentiments she expressed in her *Crusader* articles, which indicates her conflicted ideologies. This is further complicated by patronizing tone when she expresses her affectionate reverence for blacks:

[The] loyal, unflinching, and tender abnegation of those of that race whose arms were the first cradle . . . and body of whom they shielded from every bruise in life as long as they could. Perhaps it is not given to all to duly appreciate the simple grandeur of certain deeds [UU-71 7:52].

This bifurcation of sentiments is indicative of the political duality of many people in the South, wherein supporters of social equality, inevitably, were products of their own times. It would have been impossible for them to separate themselves from the superstructure of political forces and partisan acrimony that often muffled the voices that

spoke for social change. Some historians indicate that this moderate and sometimes conflicting sensibility arose from lingering racial intimacy combined with the underlying assumption of white elitism.

Our understanding of race relations in the South has been largely informed by the work of C. Vann Woodward, particularly his books, *Origin of the New South*, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, and *Future of the Past*. Friedman summarizes Woodward's argument, explaining that "segregation had not always been the way of the postbellum South. Between the demise of Reconstruction and the collapse of Southern Populism in the middle 1890s, race relations had remained fluid and relatively unstructured" (vi). Friedman says that scholars since the publication of [Woodward's] books have widely accepted the "chronological development of segregation" (vi); however, Friedman points to growing skepticism towards Woodward's thesis which "reflected the hope and optimism of the mid-1950's for a 'new say' in Southern race relations" (vii). Friedman focuses, instead, with "cynicism" on the era between the Civil War and WWI. Friedman narrows his argument, saying that since Woodward's *Origin of the New South* covered "'Black Reconstruction,' the 'biracial Populist crusade, the Atlanta Compromise, and the 'lily white' progressivism,'" he will not address these; instead, he will focus on why white southerners clamored for the psychological presence of docile black servitude. In the *Future of the Past* Woodward defends the *Strange Career of Jim Crow* saying that regarding the issue of "racial segregation and its origins . . . [he gave] priority over circumstance and plac[ed] the chronology before sociology and demography of the subject" (296). Richard C. Wade and Ira Berlin argue that segregation not only divided white from black, but divided freedmen from slaves. Howard N. Rabinowitz adds that

segregation, unfortunately, was very successful in oppression (306). Segregation was most necessary in densely populated areas; thus, most instances of Jim Crow law enforcement were found within cities. There were some exceptions, and Woodward maintains that there was a “delayed segregation, temporary fluidity, and diversity in race relations,” such as the one found in New Orleans (298). He contends that in urban developments, there were many people who wanted things they once were, but there were many who “wished to change things but despaired of ever being able to do so” (299). One cannot ignore the chronology, he maintains, because “race relations *had* history . . . [it] had not ‘always been that way’” (300), and he argues that the evidence of change logically supposes a chronology. He agrees with Rabinowits, that segregation was in evidence earlier in 1800s than he previously supposed, but he maintains vehemently that it increased as the century came to an end and that the changes in the South were based on political and not economic foundations.

Black political leaders in New Orleans also took a role in affecting change. Logsdon and Hirsch point out that Black “assertiveness and resistancy . . . sets the New Orleans experience apart from those other American towns” (191). They credit the black Creole radicalism, which was “assertive and independent, with broader horizons and self-confidence” as having an influence on resistance to Jim Crow laws, perhaps more so than elsewhere in the South (195). Even before Reconstruction, there were key black leaders who played a role in social reform. For example, Tunnell describes local ministers who “emerged as important political figures” (such as William A. Dove and Robert McCary), and Tunnell demonstrates the importance of the Louisiana National Equal Rights League and the National Convention of Colored Citizens of the United States, which “revealed

the full extent to which the war politicized the social and religious institutions of free Negro society” (74-75). Tunnell also lists important figures who were central in shaping Louisiana political thought. He defines these individuals as “the black elite of New Orleans” who “exerted a major influence in the community” (75). One such person was Paul Trévigne, who was the editor of *The Union* from 1862 through 1864, and editor for the New Orleans *Tribune* from 1864-1869 (75). Dr. Louis Roudanez and his brother Jean Baptiste Roudanez established the *Tribune*, and from 1864 “until the newspaper’s demise in 1869, they took part in every major racial controversy in the state” (75). Other important leaders were Oscar J. Dunn, James H. Ingraham and P. B. S. Pinchback. Dunn assisted freemen in finding employment after the war; Ingraham served the Union cause with gallantry, and Pinchback was instrumental in organizing a company of Native Guards. Each in turn would rise to political power. Trévigne, the Roudanez brothers, Dunn, Ingraham and Pinchback were “ambitious and articulate men of color [who] rejected white tutelage and demanded an equal role in the [Louisiana Republican] party” (111). They believed that “universal suffrage was a cardinal principle of the Republican party” (131). Dunn served as lieutenant governor, but when he died, Warmoth took measures to assure that Pinchback took Dunn’s place. Because Pinchback was “the most powerful black leader in the state” (167), and because he held the “controlling balance of power in the senate between rival factions” (168), it is likely that Pinchback was Warmoth’s only logical choice. When Warmoth was impeached, Pinchback served as governor for several weeks, during which time Warmoth attempted to secure Pinchback’s help, but Pinchback declined, saying he would do his “duty to [his] state, party, and race” (171). Pinchback believed that because whites outnumbered blacks, both in population

and power, the best course of action would be to work for reform within the system rather than attempt a revolution outside of it, a position which was criticized by Afro-Creole leaders.

Quincy Ewing is another example of those who worked towards social reform. Born near Thibodaux La in 1877, he became a reverend of the Episcopal Church and used his voice to speak for his oppressed brethren. He declared that slavery was a “foreign irritant to the body social” (Logsdon and Hirsch 122). He believed that “all the machinery of justice is in the hands of the white man” (124) and that “Negroes supply everywhere in this country the lowest social and industrial plane . . . the jails, the penitentiary, the gallows” (124). Furthermore, he pointed out that the “South’s friction between the races is entirely absent so long as the Negro justifies the white mans’ opinion of him as an inferior; and is grateful for privileges and lays no claims to *rights*” (129).

In spite of these attempts at radical reform, the close of the nineteenth century witnessed a rising tide against blacks in the forms of hostility, injustice, oppression, and disenfranchisement. Many historians maintain that blacks were used as scapegoats in order to heal the strife between the North and the South. Thus, the black population became the recipient of lingering hostilities and was blamed for the economic problems in the South. As a result, their hard-won social and political capital was compromised. For example, the Farmers Union, many of whom were Louisiana Democratic legislators, “voted for a bill which made racial segregation compulsory on all railroad coaches” (Hair 196). In 1887, no student had yet graduated from the recently established Southern University and “only 10 students [were] taking college level courses in 1898 (Hair 126). In the *Trinity Herald* on June 21, 1889, one commentator declared that ““God never

intended the Negro to be educated. Like the horse, he was destined to work for what he eats” (Hair 124-126). Very soon thereafter, the Separate but Equal statute of 1890 called for the division of races in public transportation and accommodations. By 1898, blacks could no longer vote because of the language and requirements stipulated in the grandfather clause of the 1898 constitution. The Louisiana Legislature in 1908 defeated the anti-miscegenation bill, which was designed to prohibit cohabitation between whites and blacks. This legislation left women unprotected, “whose existence men have demanded for the gratification of unlawful passions.” At the same time it was “unwilling to restrict white man’s liberty” (Ewing 133). At every turn, blacks were demoralized as they saw their dreams become nightmares and their hopes turn into despair.

One eloquent voice stands out, among many, as an articulation of the black experience, and that is W. E. B. Du Bois. Rayford W. Logan describes him as an “ardent agitator for political rights [who . . .] denounced segregation and called for integration into American society in accordance with . . . the ideals of democracy” (85). Du Bois “expressed more effectively than any of his contemporaries the protest tendency in Negro thought, and the desire for citizenship rights and integration into American society” (Logan 85), and he believed in the power of education and stressed “the building of an economic foundation, the freedmen’s primary concern” (71). Queyrouze speaks to this same issue, when she addresses a “colored man” in her *Crusader* article, saying, “[He] must no longer be a tool. He must become the hand that wields the tool and the brain that guides the hand The almighty mind . . . is also the sole guardian of supremacy and equity” [UU-71 7:52].

Du Bois confronts not only the issue of education, but criticizes how blacks are depicted when the history of America is written. He believes that the “neglect of, or prejudice against” blacks in “American historiography” is an “aspect of a prevailing elitism in dominant history-writing in general” (Long 254). His thesis has even broader implications when we study the oppressed, marginalized, and forgotten voices of the myriad of ethnic cultures that comprise this nation.

In the 1890s, Queyrouze began to assert herself more assiduously regarding the issue of racism, and under the pseudonym, Salamandra, she addressed politicians and the clergy in *The Crusader* [UU-71 7:53]. She advocated black suffrage saying that “there had been of late no inconsiderable expense in the way of pens, paper, ink, rhetoric, oratorical display, nonsense and hypocrisy in the most exalted ranks of Southern society, from the clergyman to the legist, from the would-be philanthropist and humanitarian to the dictatorial journalist” who are arguing about the “Negro problem,” and she accused all of them of trying to “derive every possible advantage from the discussion.” She criticized Catholic leaders who believed that *only* Christianity would make blacks “honest, moral God-fearing men.” She cited the violence in South Carolina in 1890¹ as evidence that white Christians had no basis for assuming to teach anyone about how to be “civilized, refined and cultured,” and said that it is fortunate that “Charity” “antedates Christianity.” She charged that if white Christians recognized the “equality of races before the creator,” why should they “deem it unworthy . . . to grant the Negro the same privilege on earth?” She reminded them that “His Infernal Highness” is a “very dark-visaged gentlemen.”

¹ Possibly a reference to the S.C. governor Pitchfork Ben Tillman who called for violence against blacks

Although she advocated for blacks, she nevertheless revealed nativistic superiority when she declared that blacks should have more right to vote than “those foreigners who come to us in hosts from countries that have no interest in common with ours.” In a classicist and elitist vein, she characterized these immigrants as “meddlesome adventurers and ambitious intriguers with an unknown past that mix turbulently into our politics, watching for their prey like ravenous wolves [. . . They were] the scum of the plebs.” She argued that these “imported evils” are sanctioned, while the black people who “for several generations born here” and “bound to this country with every fibre [sic] of his moral self” were being disfranchised. She accused politicians of using the black vote for their own aims, saying that “unscrupulous, and insatiable white politicians who, then as ever, used the confident negro, still new in the wily ways of deceit, as a tool and a screen.” She referred to an article in the *Belford* and attacked the writers who were quoted as saying that slavery was an “unqualified blessing” for blacks, and she exclaimed that their words were a “sacrilegious utterance!” She argued that the greatest crime was this:

To have christianized and civilized him, to have freed him, and made him a citizen; that is to say, to have taught him the equality of men of all hues before the Christian God . . . to have opened infinite vistas to his spirit and thrown him into the rapid current of progress to drift and be finally broken on the rock of Prejudice . . . is the veritable crime.

She then referenced the classical principles that were characteristic of much of her writing—those of philosophy--saying that this kind of prejudicial governance was not “worthy of Socrates and Plato.” This subtext of assumed superiority was further evidenced in her statement that the “white man the child of civilization, who has inherited

the capital and interests of centuries of culture, and the adept of progress, should adhere with such tenacity to his less enlightened forefather's prejudices and errors." In spite of her elitism, she embraced equality by saying it would devastate even the strongest individual to acknowledge this:

neither culture, nobleness of heart, elevation of mind, purity of aspirations, will be able even to make him or his posterity the social equal o the vilest white criminal and moral leper that he is not so much allowed to ride in the same car with this fraudulent white bankrupt and ill-smelling ruffian who not even his countryman

Clearly differentiating between her European origins and America, she continued by saying that the "least tolerant among the white race on this side of the Ocean accept and even favor the presence of the Negro as they would that of a docile domestic animal, provided he be born and bred in the dogma of submission." Alluding to recent violence and brutality against blacks, she argued that a black man did not even have "the right of defending his life and his family against the whites who attack him in superior numbers, and without any reason If he dares to obey his instinct of self-preservation, there are always a tree and a rope at hand." This strong statement challenged white supremacists who imagined that their actions were based upon righteous morality.

The only answer to the "Negro problem," she argued, is "amalgamation" because "nature and time are wiser and stronger than man's prejudices, repugnances, and narrow egotistical plans. Her closing statement alluded to her growth as a proponent of social reform, but as a Creole, she was aware of the price that Cable paid for speaking out against social injustice, and she acknowledged that she had "nothing to gain, may yet have something to lose." In spite of this, she granted the benefit of having "grown to be a

conscientious disciple of Bias.” However, still basking in the privilege of authority, she closed by declaring that through [her] contempt for human motives . . . and indifference mixed with pity for humanity, which [she] now watche[d] with the naturalists’ cold, disinterested curiosity” she had been able to pass judgment [UU-71 7:53]. Her reference to naturalism—one that the “plebs” would not understand—was an elitist gesture to Émile Zola who was credited with codifying the *roman expérimental*. Searching for empirical evidence, naturalist writers observed human activity and the environment as a laboratory in order to determine the scientific principles at work in its operation. Her allusion to these principles anticipated the naturalist movement in America that began at the turn of the century. The essential value in the study of her work, however, is not necessarily to prove her racist, elitist, and classist tendencies, but to reveal the ways in which she tried to challenge the “dogma of submission” and “Bias” of late nineteenth century America and to speak for the oppressed and disfranchised.

The deep racial conflict at the close of the nineteenth century underscores our need to reassess how we perceive ourselves as a nation and how we cast and re-cast our own history. To situate any individual or ethnic group along clearly delineated political lines is an oversimplification that does not allow for the complete picture of the *mosaïque*. Every person and every group is a *mosaïque*; each is a paradox, as is the case of Cable and Queyrouze who were two writers who tried to challenge the norms of a historical period characterized by racism. While Cable was more successful in escaping the confines of racial orthodoxy, perhaps because of his enculturation as a New England Protestant, Queyrouze—who was a French Creole daughter of a Confederate officer living in the South during Reconstruction—made noteworthy attempts to transcend those

social boundaries. That is not to say that Queyrouze did not have racist tendencies, for her assumption of ethnic superiority and her presumption to lecture the entire “black race” on education was elitist and classist. However, she perceived the writer’s task was to make commentary on social issues, and she attempted to fill that role. This may indicate that she was either aspiring towards philosophical ideals or succumbing to elitism, but in either case, the inherent value lies in her dissenting response to established norms. Her dilemma may have arisen from the conflicting impulses to fulfill her self-assigned role as a spokesperson for French cultural preservation at the same time she was calling for racial equality—an insupportable and insoluble position that overtly advocated for the eradication of class oppression and covertly for the continuance of class distinctions. Even so, the significance rests in her *attempt* rather than her success. Moreover, her rhetoric may have been a reaction against the prevailing Anglo-Saxon chauvinism at the turn of the century. At that time, many Americans believed that because of the “intelligence, morality, self-restraint, and the genius for self-government that ran in English ‘blood’ of the American people,” they alone were “capable of self-government” (Painter 151-2); thus, her challenges to freedom, power, and patriotism expressed in her speeches and articles are more clearly understood in its historical context.

By looking closely at the political and social conflicts of this period, we can reach a better understanding of the dynamics of nineteenth-century society and acknowledge that broad assumptions about an individual, a group, or a *race* cross the boundary from rational thought into irrational presuppositions. Only through examination and evaluations can any society recognize the flaws and fissures that can crumble even the strongest social construct. Greenblatt and Gallagher address this issue, calling for new

historicists to “mine what are sometimes called counter-histories that make apparent the slippages, cracks, fault lines, and surprising absences in [our] monumental structures” (17). Armed with this new awareness, we can attempt to achieve a better understanding of the complexity of our historical past and to challenge the orthodoxy of our own era.

CHAPTER SIX: QUEYROUZE IN LITERARY CONTEXT AMERICAN AND FRENCH

Beauty pertains to all its multiform manifestations, because it is an element which pervades the whole universe and emanates from it. Man cannot exile it. Its home is under all skies and it is the supreme and most perfect expression of freedom, soaring high beyond the reach of laws and tyranny . . . The artist owes something to every object in creation. The debt is mutual, and we all owe him thankfulness, for he gives life, form and expression to our ideas. . . . the scientist, the artist, and the philosopher appropriate beauty and truth, which are synonymous, wherever they find them, and giving them back transformed to the universe, render them glorified . . . --“Patriotism and Wagner” Queyrouze

While Leona Queyrouze offered commentary on the current political and social issues of the late nineteenth century, she was departing from mainstream American literary trends. Indeed, her life and work reveal an opposite impulse; instead of incorporating American aesthetics, she was choosing to define herself in terms of cultural isolation. Her work focused primarily on her local community, and her poetry with its French Romantic style and classical references indicates literary divergence. She was adhering to the aesthetics of the French romantic period while the American women writers were moving towards realism. To demonstrate this, I will contrast the major themes and trends of the work of some prominent American women writers in the late nineteenth century to Queyrouze's work and then will compare Queyrouze to French Romantic writers. Ultimately, I will show in this wide-frame transnational lens how her oeuvre exhibits a growing sense of isolation that coincides with the disappearance of an identifiably cohesive Creole culture.

American women writers were gaining a wide readership due in part to the growth of newspapers and syndicated columns in the late nineteenth century and because of the proliferation of elite publications such as *Scribners*, *Century*, *Atlantic* and *Harpers*. During this time there was a trend in literature towards dealing with more concrete and everyday experiences. Some writers placed their “subjects in specific locales, often with humor . . . which became known as the ‘local color’” movement (Donovan *Sarah Orne Jewett* 2). This in turn, served the direction towards realism, a literary path that Queyrouze did not follow in spite of the advice Hearn had given her in 1887. Donovan discusses how Romanticism and Realism functioned:

Realism is the term applied to a literary movement that developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century in reaction against or as an outgrowth of Romanticism Romantic literature tended to vaunt the value of the personal, subjective, emotional reaction and the virtues of places and times remote from the nineteenth century industrial city (129).

Realism served the new focus of woman-centered writing, and women were becoming a cultural force that gave lie to Nathaniel Hawthorne’s petulant description of them as a “damned mob of scribbling women,” and by the mid-1800s women dominated the literary marketplace. Bauer and Gould state that the influence of their work was far-reaching and that it “changed both the shape of the American literary canon and the disciples of American literary history” (i). Their work was “cultural work,” which functioned as an “advocacy of social change” (8). Their focus was upon challenging social norms and questioning personal and cultural identities. June Howard identifies this period in literature “from the 1890s well into the twentieth century” as a “vibrant dialogue over changes in women’s position and women’s aspirations” (158).

Furthermore, she adds that “the defining feature of the New Woman was that she had *choices*” (158). Donovan explains that these women writers were instrumental in changing the “dimensions of a coherent, feminine literary tradition” (*New England Local Color Literature* 3), and they accomplished this through a communal sense of shared goals. They identified themselves in the context of an “alliance with other women, and through an assessment of her [their] own realities, [and] perspectives” (3). Among these writers there was a “moral vision” that was “very much rooted in their awareness and concern about woman’s situation in the nineteenth century” (7).

The distinction between Queyrouze and mainstream writers can be found in their choices of market, audience, and genre. While American women writers were sharing a sense of a community and addressing the struggle of women towards self empowerment in everyday life, Queyrouze, instead, was fighting to preserve the romantic idea of her culture. My comparison will focus on four American women and the themes and issues in their work: Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909) was describing regional identity through her vivid characterizations in *The Country of Pointed Firs*; Mary E. Wilkins Freeman (1852-1930) was investigating the role of women in society; Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1861-1935) was surveying the landscape of a mind denied its artistic freedom in “The Yellow Wallpaper” and tracing the connections between economics, gender, and social roles in *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* (1898) and in *Herland*. In *The Awakening*, Kate Chopin was chronicling a woman’s search for artistic and sexual expression and her failure to achieve this within her socially repressive society. Leah Blatt Glasser explains that their work “represented the ambiguities of women’s experiences in the late nineteenth century [and]

explored psychological complexity” (218). Many of their stories depicted women who demonstrated the “conflicts between socially unacceptable fulfillment and acceptable self denial” (229), and Glasser adds that this was a “concept that dominated women’s lives at the turn of the century,” one that challenged the notion that the only “meaningful work for women was “devoted motherhood” (219).

While this list of American women writers is somewhat limited, and the list does not include contemporary male writers, such as Mark Twain, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, and William Dean Howells, these writers sufficiently articulate the differences between mainstream American literature and Queyrouze’s work as a French Creole writer. My intention is not to situate Queyrouze among all writers of the time period, but to demonstrate the ways in which she departed from prominent mainstream writers.

During the mid-to-late nineteenth century women often used writing as a means of financial support, and marketability was a factor in their literary choices. For example, in a letter to a friend, Freeman admitted that she was ““forced to consider selling qualities”” (Glasser 219). Kilcup and Edwards note that Jewett was a “writer deeply conscious of contemporary literary trends [which] underscores her manipulation of market influences” (17). To that end, many of these women wrote local color sketches because they were highly marketable. These stories “depicted authentic regional detail, including authentic dialect, authentic local characters, real geographical settings, authentic local customs and dress” (Donovan *New England Local Color* 7). During her career, Jewett wrote “more than 170 works of fiction” (Donovan 2) comprised of short fiction, novels, children’s books and poetry. Mary R. Reichardt notes that “between 1882 and 1928, Freeman published approximately 250 short stories in a wide variety of

magazines and newspapers” (ix). This proliferation was caused not only by literary impulses, but by economic need. Freeman wrote to one of her professors that she had to make a living writing and that poetry simply would not provide an adequate income.

For a time, Gilman supported herself by making greeting cards and teaching until her professional life flourished. She became an outspoken proponent of women’s rights, and her treatise, *Women and Economics* concentrated on women’s place in society and sought recognition for the value of women’s labor. Gilman believed that people could forge their own destiny and create their own social evolution. This is articulated in her utopian novel *Herland* (1915). Well known for her political essays and social commentary, Gilman asserted that “things could be changed for the better and surprisingly quickly, by dint of individual effort,” a belief system that defined her as an optimist (Rudd and Gough x). She foresaw “great changes in people in general, and women in particular, [which] altered their ways of life and thought” (x).

During the height of her career, she was respected as a voice for the role of women in society, and according to Lisa Ganobcsik-Williams, Gilman was “a social theorist [. . . who] placed the issue of women’s economic oppression at the center of her arguments for social reform” (16). She was fortunate to have a “network of friends that provided her with primary emotional connections or with what today we might call a ‘support group’” (Donovan 6). She was deeply aware of “connection, commitment [and] community” (Kilcup & Edwards 8). Her regular correspondence with other women writers included Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Rose Terry Cooke, and Willa Cather, among many others (16), and she was credited with having influenced Kate Chopin and Willa Cather. Her work often dealt with

the “tension between individualism and the participation of the self in a community identity” (Donovan *New England* 103), and she focused on female friendships and community through her investigation of narrative structure.

The characters in American women’s stories often dealt with the same social issues that preoccupied the lives of the authors, and many of the characters were joined by other women during the process of struggle and recognition—as were the writers themselves. In addition, the plots often served as an infrastructure for the articulation and exposition of key issues unique to the female experience. Jewett addressed “the artificially limited possibilities of emotional and intellectual development afforded women” (Donovan *New England* 99-100). For example, in the *Country of the Pointed Firs*, the narrator says that “we die before our own eyes; so we see some chapters of our lives come to their natural end” (210), but the novel is also hopeful because the women accompany one another through these chapters in their lives. “The women help one another” (Donovan 117), an aspect that is absent in Queyrouze’s work. In “The Foreigner” Jewett scores her narrative with the theme of the strong female friendships, which serves as an alternative model to the patriarchal structure of her mainstream America. Freeman’s stories often “deal with the mother-daughter bond or with similarly intense relationships between women” (Donovan *New England* 121).

Among these writers there appears to be a shared sense of community in a diachronic and synchronic dialogue, and within their work one can perceive an intertextual dialectic. Unlike Queyrouze, these women were a part of a “widely circulating cultural discourse” (Bauer and Gould 5) that was contributing to “the emerging national community” (12) as defined by Habermas as the “large imagined

public community” (Nelson 39). Jewett was leery of “extreme individualism” and believed in the “virtues of association” (Donovan 73). Beginning in 1886 and continuing through 1895, her stories focused “on individuals moving out of their shells of isolation towards participation in a larger community” (73). In 1896, she published *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, which revolved around “the presence of two women at a series of events and the growth of their relationship with one another” (99); it was a story of community and the effects that people have upon one another. Queyrouze’s work, however, does not follow this pattern. The experiences she relates are solitary and self-reflective. This is further evidence of her isolation from the mainstream of literary tradition. Even though she lived far from the hubs of literary activities in New York and Boston, she spent extended periods of time in New York working for *Harper’s Bazar*. This would have afforded her ample exposure to the current literary trends and to the influences of contemporary society. Therefore, her separation was not predicated on lack of opportunity, which can lead to one possible conclusion-- her isolation was one of choice.

While the forgoing demonstrates the differences between Queyrouze and these writers, there are several connections arising from the internal conflicts they experienced while trying to simultaneously maintain and challenge their social constructs. Freeman’s duality is found in her “conflicts between defiance and submission, self-fulfillment and self-sacrifice” (Glasser xvi). “In some of her work, the voice is defiant, unwilling to submit. In other works, we hear passive acceptance and internalization of oppressive standards . . . ending with inevitable ambiguity” (xviii), but her focus was on women. In her 1908 novel, *The Shoulders of Atlas*, she describes a woman who is paralyzed by her vacillation between submission to cultural pressures and rebellion against them. An

interesting comparison piece to this is Queyrouze's "Atlas" (1901) that describes the burden of carrying the weight of her culture. The classical references of the stoic symbol of Atlas is accompanied by references to his female counterpart, the stone Caryatid, who holds over her head the heavy burden of the temple. Also included are references to Ixion and Sisyphus who represent ceaseless toil and eternal burdens: For his crimes of murder and adultery, Ixion was condemned by Zeus to be spend eternity bound to a fiery wheel, and Sisyphus was punished by Zeus for his deception and trickery to eternally roll a stone uphill only to have it fall as he neared the top. These symbols support the central theme of stoicism in "Atlas":

On my descending path, suddenly I saw an enormous shadow
And, against the clear sky was a deformed profile
Of a Giant bending at the knees.
His heavy face looked out into beautiful space.
And I expected his athletic shoulders to crack
Under the awesome burden while the tempest
Blasted him, roaring over his flashing crown
And his lightning scepter.

 "O you of the universe
Dark Caryatid! Atlas, convict of a prison
Immense! You live to roll these mountains
Into the waves of forgetfulness that Sisyphus carried
Under Ixion's wheel, haggard and despairing,
At last you rest; then once again you rise shaking,
Your godless Olympus reviving
Your deadened muscles."

 The monster cannot move
Yet seems to turn to his pupil and stops
In the misty eternity, and in a voice that echoes
like the thunder to say: I watch
In the night that fills your eyes, and I know all.
Yes, the Olympus is deserted, but Prometheus is standing;
Cursed for eternity. I am the last one; I remain.
Listen and you will know. Jupiter in a gesture
Left upon my back this horrible burden.

No more do I wish to see through this curtain
Of my dazzling tears, so inscrutable into my very core.
I contemplate my soul or scream blasphemy . . .

[UU-71 7:54]
(Appendix 240)

The *Shoulders of Atlas* and “Atlas” indicate that Freeman and Queyrouze could not escape the inscribed boundaries of their culture. Amy Kaplan states that Freeman “‘stayed within domestic regional boundaries while subverting them as centers of social protest’ . . . but she never asks her characters to step outside of the system” (215). This was also true for Queyrouze because she centered her battle on the pages of periodicals that reached only a select audience. While Freeman’s characters remained inside her domestic space, Queyrouze remained within the self-constructed Creole system of cultural isolation. Because Queyrouze was writing in French to a diminishing audience, her literary obscurity was a self-fulfilled destiny; however, many mainstream women writers who enjoyed widespread fame during their lifetimes fell into anonymity in the twentieth century until they were resurrected during the feminist movement of the seventies, as was the case for Gilman.

An intersection of ideologies between Gilman and Queyrouze involves their patronizing attitudes towards other classes and cultures. However, from a new historicist perspective, this “can be seen as part of the social climate of the times and it is possible to describe her views as representing the best intentions expressed in terms which are only now regarded as patronizing and white-centered” (xiii). Ganobcsik-Williams articulates the value in investigating these conflicting impulses within the writing of social

reformists. To view history in binary simplicity or to leave this area of “race, class, and ethnicity” unexamined “blocks a fuller understanding of [their] place within intellectual history in general—and within late nineteenth—and early twentieth century social reform discourse in particular” (16). However, this does not “excuse [their] naiveté and ignorance concerning the hardships encountered by people of color in the United States and the repercussions of condescending attitudes” (17). For instance, in “A Suggestion on the Negro Problem” (1908) Gilman states that “Americans were experiencing different stages of evolution, with whites having reached a higher stage than blacks” (19), a comment that is “extremely callous and naïve” and one that reveals her “ignorance in dealing with racial issues” (20). Assuming her own racial superiority, she notes in *Herland* that “it was important to know one’s ‘exact line of descent,’ and that her own bloodlines were reassuringly traceable to America’s white Puritan founders” (23). This is remarkably similar to Queyrouze’s discussion of the treatment of blacks in her *Crusader* article, written under the pseudonym, Salamandra. In her 1889, is an article entitled “The Race Problem Logically Discussed,” Queyrouze, warns that the “inequity of the fathers will be visited upon the children.” The same law of heredity that applies to Nature applies to nations because a nation is “but a magnified image of the family.” She reasons that the “present troubles between the white and black races” is a result of the “grievous sin committed by our American predecessors: the importation of the Negro,” but then she quickly adds that her own ancestry is pure, saying that “the writer of these lines, whose ancestors were born in Louisiana for many generations, belongs to the purest type of the noble Latin and Gallic races combined, and has consequently no interest in being partial to the black race” [UU-71 7:52].

While Gilman and Queyrouze used poetry as a means of artistic expression, the difference rests in their choice of style and topic. Gilman “sought to use poetry as a political force and to this end made use of styles which had an established popular appeal” (Rudd, Gough xviii). Catherine J. Golden writes that Gilman “began her public career as a poet and wrote poetry throughout her life as a means of social criticism” and that “her nearly five hundred poems expose problematic aspects of traditional domesticity” some gathered in her volume of poetry entitled *In This Our World* (1896) (243). Golden characterizes Gilman’s poetry as a body of work that does not follow any prescribed literary school but says that it does echo the style of Whitman, and Gilman refers to her public poetry as a “‘tool box. It was written to drive nails with’ because she ‘saw no point in writing without a social purpose’ (244-5). Her poems “subvert patriarchal ideologies, challenge female subjugation, and argue for equal rights [. . . and] calls for women’s empowerment” (245). In a poem entitled “To the Young Wife” Gilman asks:

Are you content, you pretty three-years’ wife
Are you content and satisfied to live
On what your loving husband loves to give,
And give to him your life? (246).

Queyrouze’s discussion about this issue is limited. “Lolotte” is an isolated example:

So why then, at the flower of her age
does she enter into marriage,
when she had all the time to choose?

But we all attend the party
and we all turn heads,

and take advantage of serious fools
and we all join in the treachery
to commit our suicide
so all that's left is farewell.

[UU-71 7:56]
(Appendix 259)

This poem indicates that Queyrouze imagines marriage to be an end to autonomy and indeed, to be a form of death, but she does not cast the blame on the men whom she deems as “serious fools;” rather, she considers women culpable—they have become their own worst enemies. However, this type of social commentary about women is scant in Queyrouze’s oeuvre while it comprises the bulk of Gilman’s poetry.

Gilman’s private poetry, however, reveals another side of her nature, and in this aspect she is most akin to Queyrouze. Both women exhibit “complex dichotomies between [their] public and private lives” (Knight 283). The subject matter of their poetry often deals with the love and with loss. Denise D. Knight focuses on Gilman’s unpublished private verse that reveals Gilman’s “deepest hurts, her highest ambitions, her darkest fears” (269). While Gilman is optimistic in the public realm, her private verse is a mixture of hope and loss. She writes in her diary in 1883:

Alone am I, chillhearted [sic] still, and dreary;
Alone art thou, sadhearted [sic] worn, and weary;
Alone indeed are we.

.....

Alone are thou, I know not of thy sorrow.
Alone am I; and all life’s tomorrow
Looks desolate and grey. (277).

While Gilman's sense of sorrow and loss is intermittent and often punctuated by hope and joy, Queyrouze's work retains the sense of sadness throughout, thus articulating the major difference between the writers, for while Gilman is essentially an optimist, Queyrouze is a pessimist.

Mainstream American women writers exhibited a shared sense of community and purpose, addressing women's issues in genres that were marketable and widely read. Their synchronic goal was to effect changes in the fabric of American society. From *within* the cultural system, they were attempting to make changes that would afford women more autonomy and power. As such, their mission could be described as one wherein they were trying to make their society function more successfully and fairly. The essential difference between these writers and Queyrouze is that she was writing *outside* the system. Her aspirations were driven by different impulses—she was trying to cast blame on the American cultural system rather than trying to change it. Granted, American women writers were challenging the system, but their work could not necessarily be characterized as hostile, while Queyrouze's relationship to the dominant culture was antagonistic. She perceived her role to be warrior, attempting to rescue her culture from oblivion. Symbolized by the busts of Diana and Venus gracing her parlor, she injects her poetry with the themes of warlike protectionism and elegiac love. While she admits that “it was never my original intention to fight” and that she never wanted “this dark struggle,” nevertheless, she declares her intentions to use her words as a sword:

“*Ad Pennam*”

Gold and fine pearls are reflected in the sky
Like fine jewels, but I want to make it into a sword
As we both struggle for the same dream,
Without faltering in the clash of a strange duel.

It was never my original intent to fight over the honey
Of the swarm of Hymette. Or burning leaves.
My large heart is still open for you even as you drink from it without pity
Never realizing that the venom you drank was bile.

But when I lost faith, I lost courage,
The hand I placed in yours was for our alliance
And I did not reproach you, but alas, was it not to reconcile?

Oh, I never wanted this dark struggle
Or wished for the power to defeat you! Oh no. Rather, for us to sway
In the shrouding river, where we could fall into silence [UU-71 7:56].
(Appendix 264)

Increasing the intensity of her rhetoric, Queyrouze admonishes those she believes
were traitors to her cause and in angry tones she takes issue with those who gave into
pressure and succumbed to the enemy in “*Parce Nocere*:”

You are a passing traitor bathed in infamy
And bowed with shame, and you extend a hand?
Have you washed your feet that were hurt along the way?
Have you cleansed the outrage from your dirty face?
To save yourself from the foul enemy,
Affronted by their hisses, strong and superhuman,
Did you acknowledge your brother and share the light
And spread your coat over him while he slept?
Misfortune on you! . . . [UU-71 7:56] (Appendix 265)

In “*Allegorie: Peusée d’un Créole*” (1891), she uses an analogy to describe her sentiments about her culture being overrun by America, which she depicts as a parasite. Her anger surfaces when she refers to this parasite as a “living insult:”

In the old trunk is a withered branch that is destroyed.
There are no more flowers, foliage, or fruits.
Around its barren surface a voracious vine
Surrounds it, climbing and overrunning it. Empty
Is the source of life. Even worse, the face of
This ghostly tree can feel a living insult:
Thereupon it hatches and gleams a strange flower
With the breath of a parasite that feeds itself on meager light [UU-71 7:55].
(Appendix 238)

While the previous poem makes oblique references to her enemy, she is less circumspect in her poem “*Imprecatio*” (1891). Her enemy is clearly named, and she uses the images of the “river” to demonstrate how her culture was overwhelmed, and the “tomb” and the “abyss” to indicate how she defines the fate of her culture. She characterizes their experiences as one of exile, and she mourns the loss of her language that was the mode and method she used to preserve her culture and speaks to her insistence on writing mostly in French:

. . . the fading flower of our Creole race
Once a proud race. The other nation

Those mere infants with their blonde looks and words
Crush under their heels the generations
Of the French and the Latin, the grand Spanish,
And all those who knew the same passion.

To love, to seek vengeance, to hate, to forgive . . .
. . . Our ancestors' language
Is now denigrated and only found on headstones.

Cut off and exiled, we are ushered to the
The large rolling river where its heavy waves take us under
Taking all, carrying all, into the tomb of the abyss [UU-71 7:55].
(Appendix 255)

These excerpts give voice to Queyrouze's cause, which was not to secure women's rights, but to secure the future for her culture. In "*Caryatis*," she describes her self-assigned role, which is to stoically carry the burden of cultural preservation, and she appears to achieve some comfort from her poetry in order to sustain her efforts.

Over your head, you hold the massive granite architecture.
Through the breadth of time,
You have never bent,
And your far reaching look grows and
Sees the delirious passage of humanity,

And several times that lighting has engraved your eyes
And scolded the temple, trembling,
But you remained standing while I am ready to fall
Under the weight
Seeing you, I stand up braver . . . [UU-71 7:56].
(Appendix 244)

In a brief poem, simply entitled, "*Sonnet*," she articulates her pain and likens her attempt to save her culture and her ultimate failure to the Stations of the Cross:

If ever you learned to despair
All that you had cherished, and rose up with your face smeared
And your knees bleeding, at the last station
Of the cross on Golgotha, and then drink without ever emptying

The deep chalice that makes you tremble close to breaking
And to doubt that you and the gods are the same;
And like Julien, without any comprehension
Cast your blood to the heavens without being able to appease;

If ever your dreams became grindstones and all seemed
Formidable, and Life was for you an empty soul
And Like Samson, you wandered in the desert

Without dawn and without stars in delirious darkness
Well then, gladiator, I am forced to smile
Ah! Do not blaspheme. You have not suffered!

L'Abeille 1896 [UU-71 8:59]
(Appendix 273)

This poem indicates that she knew that she was fighting a losing battle, and while there are some parallels between Queyrouze's work and her contemporaries, their literary paths diverge. Separated by culture, religion and regions, Queyrouze was following a distinctly different literary path. Jewett, Freeman and Gilman were publishing in the prominent periodicals whereas Queyrouze was submitting her work to journals that were reaching an increasingly smaller audience. Queyrouze's themes did not call for the autonomy of women; rather, she was fighting for her culture. There is, however, one significant connection to American writers, one that can be found in the work of Kate Chopin (1851-1904), and she represents an interesting mixture of American and Creole sensibilities and serves as a bridge between the two worlds.

Chopin was born into a comfortable middle-class Irish family in St. Louis, but she was exposed to the French culture through her relationship with her grandmother. Schuyler notes that she enjoyed an active social life in St. Louis before meeting Oscar Chopin, a “wealthy cotton factor of New Orleans” who had a distant connections with the Charlevilles” and had “hosts of ‘cousins’ in the Pelican state” (Petty 62). After a lengthy sojourn in Europe, Kate and her husband moved to New Orleans. Over the next ten years, she bore six children. Joy Jackson notes that Chopin lived in New Orleans for ten years where her husband worked as a cotton merchant. When his business went under, they moved to Cloutierville, and he opened a general store in 1880, but he died in 1882. Kate remained for two more years before returning to St. Louis where she began to write short stories, character sketches and novels about Louisiana characters. Her turn towards writing was brought about by necessity. Kenneth Eble explains that after Chopin’s mother died in 1885 Chopin began writing in order to support her family. Kate’s work was well received and she reached some financial success, but that changed when her novel, *The Awakening*, was published. Eble relates how much controversy her novel created upon its publication in 1899. It was removed from library shelves, and she was refused acceptance into the Fine Arts Club in St. Louis. Up until that time, her work had been widely accepted and had gained momentum alongside other local color writers such as Grace King and George Washington Cable.

The 1899 reviews of *The Awakening* were passionate and centered on the character of Edna Pontellier. One author declared that Edna’s death should serve as a cautionary example of what happens to women when they follow their whims. Another denounced Edna and expressed satisfaction that she took her life. Others disagreed and

expressed compassion for Edna, while still others tried to delve into the reasons that Edna failed to find artistic and personal actualization. Some believed that she acted without courage because she did not understand, as Mademoiselle Reisz did, that true art demands great courage.

The debate also focused on Chopin's ability to understand the Creole culture. William Schuyler related that her father, Thomas O'Flaherty, was a "native of Galloway, Ireland, and for many years was a prominent merchant in St. Louis. Her mother was the daughter of a Huguenot family" (Petry 61). Schuyler attempts to trace Chopin's affiliation with the Creole French to the "French blood in Mrs. Chopin's ancestry" (61). As evidence, he notes that Chopin grew up attended by black servants and that she was exposed to their dialect as well as the French patois spoken by grandmother. When she began writing, Schuyler argues, her tastes in reading leaned "to the French school." She read with pleasure Molière, Alphonse Daudet, and especially De Maupassant and Zola" (63). Eble notes that Chopin read "Flaubert, Tolstoy, Turgenev, D'Annunzio, Bourget, Goncourt, and Zola" (Petry 81). Joseph J. Reilly believes that Chopin was emulating Maupassant who espoused the view that "character rather than situation" is the key to understanding passion (Petry 71), and Chopin followed this model in her novel *The Awakening*. Moreover, her direct style, descriptions, and conclusions—sans the cynicism—could be ascribed to Maupassant. Eble praises *The Awakening*, saying that it is "advanced in theme and technique over the novels of its day and that it anticipates in many respects the modern novel" and argues that it is "not characteristic of American writing" (Petry 76). He compares Chopin's novel to *Madame Bovary* claiming that "Chopin herself was probably more than any other American writer of her time under

French influence” (77). Eble defends this claim by stating that her “background was French-Irish; she married a Creole; she read and spoke French and knew contemporary French literature” (77). Her exposure to French prose influenced her writing style, but I believe that her enculturation in Midwest American values was an overriding guide to the moral underpinning of her work.

Chopin was an American writer, in spite of her associations, and thus could never be entirely free of the Anglo-American influence. Her exposure to the French Creole culture did not equate to being *one* with that culture because close associations could not replace social indoctrination. Any ethnographer will attest to the fact that an individual who investigates a culture—even one’s own—is at once removed. This disjunction can be found in the character of Edna Pontellier who Larzar Ziff believes “was an American woman, raised in the Protestant mistrust of the senses . . . [but] her nature awakened in the open surroundings of Creole Louisiana” (304). Thus, Chopin’s sensibilities were not unlike the character she imagined. Edna was an outsider, “though she had married a Creole, [she] was not thoroughly at home in the society of Creoles” (Chopin 18). Like the character she imagined, Chopin could not have possibly foreseen upon her arrival in New Orleans as Oscar Chopin’s wife that “respectable women took wine with their dinner and brandy after it, smoked cigarettes, played Chopin’s sonatas, and listened to men tell risqué stories. It was, in short, far more French than American” (Ziff 297). Chopin was an outsider to this culture and clearly was aware of the difference. Emily Toth describes Chopin’s experience:

Although she had French roots, and was even related to several Cloutierville families on her mother’s side, the new Madame Chopin was a thorough outsider

in the eyes of Oscar's family. New Orleans was still occupied by uniformed Union soldiers, and Kate Chopin had come from a state that had not seceded . . . to Oscar's relatives, Kate's Midwestern origins, her frank and forthright ways, and her insistence on doing strange things—such as taking long walks by herself—made her seem more Yankee than Southern. They regarded her with great suspicion and disapproval (66-67).

Adding to this suspicion was the Chopins' choice to live on the "other" side of Canal Street; the "newlyweds deliberately chose a house outside the Quarter, across the Canal Street dividing line, 'the American side'" (65). Even when they were outside of the city at the Creole resort at Grand Isle, Kate was treated as "a foreigner, a Northerner, and an outsider" (78).

Chopin inscribes Edna Pontellier with her own sensibilities: Edna failed to negotiate her place in the Creole social structure, and was unable to resolve the disparate aspects of herself as she searched for role models to follow. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar describe this tortuous path of self-definition and the difficulty of finding suitable role models. In the introduction to *The Awakening and Selected Stories*, Gilbert states that the novel reveals the "wordless wail of every woman whose passion for self fulfillment has been forbidden or forgotten" (8). One of Edna's role models (one which some critics have dubbed the "madwoman in the attic") is Mademoiselle Reisz whose "clarity of mind offers a striking contrast to the essentially abstract nature of Edna's quest" (Thornton 88). Even though Edna has the sensitivity of the artist, she does not have the required sense of self and inner discipline to succeed, and Reisz admonishes her by saying that "to succeed, the artist must possess the courageous soul . . . that dares and defies" (Chopin 106). Lawrence states that Reisz in the "only example of a free, independent woman" in the novel (89) even if her character is flawed by her willingness to be aggressive and

insensitive, often quarrelsome and brusque. In spite of this, she embodies certain qualities that are similar to Leona Queyrouze. An accomplished pianist living in the French Quarter, she is independent, artistic, outspoken, and unmarried. However, Queyrouze also has many of the qualities that Chopin reserves for Edna who is passionate and is plagued by feelings of longing and loss. While Queyrouze was subject to sentimentality and melancholy, she was assertive, independent and outspoken. In many ways, Queyrouze's life is an amalgam of the characters portrayed in *The Awakening*, thus indicating that a true picture of what it meant to be a Creole in New Orleans at the close of the nineteenth century can be found more clearly in life than it can in fiction.

The mixture of these American sensibilities and Creole influence imbue *The Awakening* with a tension that resembles the uneasy relations between the Creoles and Americans towards the close of the century. Edna is a paradox, for she is American in much of her sensibilities yet "dressed" as a Creole. Her inner sensibilities are American: she feels puritanical restraint on her sensuality, both as an artist and as a woman, and she lives in the American section of New Orleans on the other side of Canal Street. Yet, she adheres to the customs and manners of the Creoles. Perhaps her blueprint was Chopin herself, who was understandably American given her upbringing, but who had learned the manner of the Creoles. Like her character, Chopin was trying to fit into a model that was foreign to her. The difference is that Chopin, who had an affair with a married plantation owner, did not suffer the same fate she ascribes to her character.

Edna ends her life in the sea where she had begun her awakening, and this raises the question why the location *off* the mainland is where Edna finds both birth and death. Does it mean that on the *mainland*, a place that was quickly becoming Americanized, she

could not survive? Clearly, it was not solely Robert Lebrun who had awakened Edna, for her lovers became interchangeable. In the closing chapter of the book, she says “Today it is Arobin; to-morrow it will be some one else. It makes no difference to me” (188). This might indicate that it was her entry into a *place*-- not her association with lovers-- that caused her awakening. Perhaps, it was the “voice of the sea [that] speaks to the soul” (Chopin 25), and that Edna—like Queyrouze-- was reaching for something that was just out of reach. In the end, Edna swam towards that ephemeral dream even though she knew she was swimming towards her demise.

Many scholars believe that Edna serves as the voice of a woman who is being drowned by her oppressive culture, but I would add that she also serves as a symbol for the Creole society. Edna is the voice of women; Queyrouze is the voice of Creoles. Queyrouze is aware of her own demise—as an individual and as a culture— and she documents this descending arch in her poetry and her essays. Try as she might to hold on to her dream, it was vanishing, and she reached for it even as she knew that it was sinking. Edna said that when she awoke from a nap and looked out over the island that it seemed as if “a new race of beings must have sprung up, leaving only you and me as past relics” (Chopin 63). Likewise, Queyrouze says in “*Silhouettes Créoles*” there has been a change because of the “the absorption of the Creole race into the Anglo Saxon element.” She continues, saying that the “irresistible flood of assimilation takes over rapidly without resistance; the tide rises to submerge us, the current drowns us” [UU-70 6:47]. Thus, one must ask: Who is it that drowns at Grand Isle? Is it Edna or is the Creole culture? If Edna is an American, her death symbolizes her failure to thrive within a patriarchal social

structure that suppressed women's artistic freedom. If she is a Creole, her death is emblematic of the drowning of a culture.

Queyrouze's oeuvre indicates that she was simultaneously fighting to preserve her culture at the same time she was mourning its demise. The sense of elegy also migrates to her expressions of love, and the result is a body of work that is, all at once, rebellious, mournful, plaintive, and stoic. The causes for the demise of the French Creole culture are numerous, but the central cause is that they were out of rhythm with the rest of the country. For her part, Queyrouze was a woman out of place and out of time. Her poetry shows her preoccupation with love, nature and death, which were hallmarks of French Romanticism, yet her structured style and classical references reveal that she was borrowing from the Enlightenment period as well. Thus, her poetry did not belong to the period in which it was written, but rather to the literary period that had ended long before she was born.

The French Romantic period was an outgrowth and reaction against the Enlightenment, and Robert T. Denommé outlines the events leading to this period and those following it. The Enlightenment "indirectly paved the way for French Romanticism" because of its focus on "simplicity and natural laws" (5). The *philosophes* encouraged one to view society without its "existing customs and conventions" (5). Denommé cites Rousseau's *Le Contrat Social* (*The Social Contract*) that "articulates a vision of such a society [and. . .] the lush exoticism permeating the novels of Jean-Jacques Roussau and Bernardin de Saint-Pierre [as] explicit criticism of the conditions contaminating organized society in the eighteenth century" (5-6). These and other writers believed that "wisdom and happiness are goals best realized in primitive surroundings"

(6). The exoticism encountered in their novels “surrounds and enshrines the individual as he turns his back upon a deficient society which he regards as intolerable and unworthy of reform” (6). This “acts as a liberating force” (7). The Enlightenment thinkers believed that an “adequate definition of man could be achieved through controlled reason and logic;” however, the Romantics believed that “reason alone was incapable of arriving at a comprehensive understanding of man in the universe” (7).

Romanticism had been firmly established in England and Germany for many years before it took root in France. Denommé cites the reasons for its late arrival:

The spirit of Classicism and of the pseudo neo-Classicism that dominated French literature for more than two centuries was destined to logically win the ready approval of the imperial regime of Napoleon and the restored Bourbon dynasty which lasted until 1830 (11).

The politics and the literature of any nation are inextricably connected, and this was true for France in the early 1800s. Because the classical style served Napoleon’s political aims, “strict censorship was instituted during [his] administration that favored the publication of odes, tragedies, and novels written according to classical prescriptions” (11). Romanticism did not flourish until these political strictures were loosened.

With the collapse of the empire, the political landscape changed, and so did its literature. Perceiving their role to be the voices of reform, poets such as Lamartine and Hugo with “exalted fervor and messianic zeal,” pursued their “humanitarian concerns . . . and their dreams of social utopias”(32). Lamartine argued that “poetry had a service to render society,” and Hugo believed that a poet should function as the voice of social responsibility. They regarded their “position of the poet as leader and guide,” and this

ideology held through the 1840s during the regime of Louis-Philippe when the “social, political, religious, and poetical elements merged together” (32). When French Romanticism finally took hold, it was a very “effective combination of the use of reason and emotion” (12), and Lamartine, Hugo and Vigny tried to “rework the tenets and traditions of Christianity into a new framework to make it correspond to the need of the nineteenth century” (140). They sought to “append the more personal mystiques of emotion, sentiment and intuition to reason in order to arrive at a more comprehensive view of the universe” (41), and they were inspired by Germaine Necker de Stael, who was “the first significant theorist of French Romanticism” with the publication of her book *On Germany* in 1810 (12). Hugo saw de Stael’s work as a manifesto and believed that “ancient literature is for us a modern transplanted literature; however, romantic or chivalrous literature is indigenous to us, since it is our own religion and institutions that have inspired it” (15-16). Thus, it is imbued with “spirituality and Christianity” (16). Madame de Stael believed that the “objective [of literature is] to move the soul and ennoble it” (17).

Leona Queyrouze was often called the “little Madame de Stael” by those in her salon, and this is an important distinction because Queyrouze’s work embodies many of de Stael principles, which classified “all of western literature as either northern or southern” (13). “Northern” was Britain and Germany—foggy and imaginative—which was permeated with religiosity. “Southern” was Greece, Rome, Italy and France and Spain, which were influenced by pagans; southern was simultaneously sensual and logical. This may account for the sensuous imagery and references to pagan gods found in Queyrouze’s work.

However, long before Queyrouze was born, the Romantic period in France ended. The “campaign by the leading French Romanticists for a social utopia ended cruelly and abruptly in 1851 with the assumption of Napoleon III as emperor” (40). Thus, when Queyrouze began to write her poetry in the 1880s, she was adhering to the style and sentiments that she had long been out favor, both in America and abroad.

Not only did Queyrouze follow romantic traditions, she incorporated classical references in her poetry. In fact, she dedicated some of her work to Jean Baptiste Racine (1639-1699) who wrote several dramatic masterpieces (considered the great tragedies of the French theater) as well as poetry, all of which relied on themes from Roman and Greek classics. Racine’s style was neoclassic and his classical poetry employed rhymed alexandrine verse. Queyrouze’s classical references were following this tradition.

Primarily, however, her work reflects the romantic style. Some of her poetry is dedicated to Alfred de Musset, one of France’s leading romantic poets and dramatists. In her poem “*a l’Opera*,” Queyrouze begins with an epigraph by Alfred de Musset, and then proceeds to emulate his style, using the music of opera as her muse. Frits Noske explains that many of Musset’s poems were composed under the “influence of music” (74), and Queyrouze takes Violetta’s voice to inspire her verse and to express her heart-felt pain:

Violetta’s song disturbed the space between us,
her hymn learned too late burned into our hearts,
Embracing us both with powerful sweetness
entering our sleep, awakening the pain . . .

L’Abeille 1886 [UU-71 7:56].
(Appendix 262)

In her poem, “*Resurge*,” she addresses the power of music directly and says that it has the power to release her from the confines of ignorance and to raise her to higher levels of thought:

I crouched against a wall. Then, in the shadows, the sounds
From a crimson apparition came, suspended in air
Nebulous and trembling, spreading its
Wings of New Thought. And my reveries were channeled

Into the mystery, harkening to the delirious verse,
Until I left my misty prison, following the music
Of the low voice, leaning towards my release . . .

L’ Abeille 1908 [UU-70 6:45].
(Appendix 271)

Musset believed that “Romanticism is rooted in the belief that love, with its attendant joys and sufferings, constitutes the greatest single source of man’s inspiration since it reveals to him the significance of human existence “ (131), but he felt that this kind of intensity could not last. There is a pervasive sense in his poetry that “his energy and time is limited and that he wished to convey the intensity of his love experience in poetry before his time ran out” (132), and there is this same sense of urgency in Queyrouze’s work as well; for example, in “*Vision*,” she says:

So much life still—and love
And the fullness of kisses sweet,
Like prayers upon the altar of death,
Life lies triumphant
Trembling like a devouring flame.
But I feel the searing pain enter my soul
Like a funeral bird, and I fear the flame . . .

C.R.A.L. 40 [UU-70 6:45]. (Appendix 276)

Musset defined poetry as ‘spontaneous conversation with the heart’ (Denommé 136), and Queyrouze often used her poetry to express her love, loss, and longings. Note the similarities between Musset and Queyrouze in this excerpt. Musset writes:

*Sachez-le, c'est le Coeur qui parle et qui soupier,
Lorsque la main écrit, --c'est le Coeur qui se fond;
C'est le Coeur qui s'étend, se découvre et respire,
Comme un gai pèlerin sur le sommet d'un mont.*

Know that it is the heart that speaks and sighs, when it is the hand that writes, it is the heart that dissolves itself; it is the heart that stretches itself, that exposes itself and breathes, like a happy pilgrim who has reached the mountain top (Denommé 138).

Queyrouze declares in “*Impromptu*”:

If I were Romeo I would dare to climb
These fragile vines to reach you in rapture
And I would climb to the heavens for my love
[UU-70 6:45]. (Appendix 258)

In “*Phyrne*” she addresses her love:

If you had not so many urgings born of Doubt
Love, we could have been so much more, sweet and true
So that when the winds of strife would rend us,
We would have spread our wings of love
And sailed across the troubled skies [UU-70 6:45].
(Appendix 266).

In “*Somniavi*,” she uses the analogy of a vine reaching towards the sky to symbolize the aspirations of the heart:

.....

*Qu'un instant, comme toi, devant ce ciel immense,
J'ai serré dans mes bras la vie et l'espérance,
Et qu'ainsi que le tien, mon rêve s'est enfui?*

my dream escaped from me? (Denommé 140).

Once my soul held a cherished vision
and like a tree , it grew in strength and love
and its very summit held the skies aloft
... was it a dream—a dream all? [UU-71 7:55]
(Appendix 237)

202

praising Queyrouze, saying that she was a poet in the tradition of Hugo and Lamartine.

There are several examples that demonstrate Hugo's influence on her work.

Queyrouze's poem "*à ma Mère*" embodies the hallmarks of French Romantic literary tradition, inspired by Musset and Hugo. She sees the stars in the heavens as hopeful signs, but the stars, like the French Romantic period, are extinguished:

Why flee, o radius of love,
Without return?
Stay and shine to the heavens where springs
All our hope.
.....
A capricious sprite
In the heavens
Suddenly saw the star and plucked it
.....
Leaving the tender lovers
In torment [UU-71 8:59]

Queyrouze acknowledged Hugo in this poem by incorporating his words in an epigraph: "*Vois,--c'est un météore! Il éclate et s'éteint*" (See--it is a meteor! It explodes and dies away). Note the similar imagery in her sonnet for "*Magda Turpin*":

. . . You eyes are closed like those fading stars
Under a brilliant sun, but the meteor
Makes your face resplendent and raises you above the pain

[UU-71 7:55]. (Appendix 274)

There are distinct similarities between Hugo's poem "*Ce que dit la Bouche d'ombre*" (What the Mouth of Darkness Says) and Queyrouze's poem "*Ce qu'ont dit les*

Montagnes” (What the Mountain Said). Both of these demonstrate a “mystical belief in a world that participates in the being of God in universal harmony” (Denommé 38).

This philosophy is articulated in Hugo’s verses:

*Imaginai-tu donc l’univers autrement?
Non, tout est une voix et tout est un parfum;
Tout dit dans l’infini quelque chose à quelqu’un;
Une pensée emplit le tumulte superbe.*

Did you imagine the universe any differently? No. There is but one voice and one perfume. In God everything says something to someone. There is but a single idea, and it permeates the superb hubbub of creation (Denommé 40).

This same philosophy functions in Queyrouze’s work, and is most clearly expressed in her poem, “*ce qu’ont dit les Montagnes.*” One can see that there is a single idea and one voice that exists in all creation. She combines all religions—that of the pagan gods and the God of Israel and all creation is combined in one “vibrant harmonious cry:”

Night weighed heavy upon the sacred summits
Where the distant centuries in returning mists,
Like giant specters veiled in shrouds of mystery,
Listened to the echoes of the earth
Through a door that sometimes opened fleetingly.
All at once in the dreadful calm
There was heard the formidable vibrant harmonious cry
Of the first song of the world and the mortal cries of agony
Of Creation falling once again into the void.
In many voices towards a gaping space,
They all cried out: Bend your face, o zenith, to me.
I am the Himalaya. Once I knew
An unknown hand that carved us from chaos,
And this hand carried the purest of jewels,

The star of day, the flaming spirit of Being,
And when I saw this immense fearsome master
Tears etched my face at its incredible beauty
That was modeled after eternity,
Rising above the immortal souls,
This, his work and his love, so plaintive, so beautiful,
So forgiving. I have seen these things
While upon my flanks I have felt
Rising humanity flooding the immense plains
Where, they tire of the invisible chain
And turn to build great granite towers of Babel,
Where science robbed them of the dream of knowledge
Because their God is veiled in the infinite limits
Of the unlimited.

Oh sun of Israel,
Sinai, shakes his mane of lighting,
His voice resounding through the air
Like vibrant echoes of sacred trumpets,
Its brightness striking the wayward tribes.
“Surely, there is nothing more than this, Sinai,
for on my forehead rests the foot of Adonis
as I keep repeating the eternal words,
the pregnant knowledge of what is to come,
while my shoulders carry the sapphire sky
With weight so heavy that weariness returns.”

There is a flame embracing the heights of Parnassus
Where triumphant Helios reigns
With his dominance over the world, where the sudden wind
That comes from the infinite resounds the lyre,
Awakening into a divine ecstasy
The mountains of the gods. Hail fiery Apollo!
Towards you the whirlwind swarms,
Towards the ideals, the ecstasies and the dreams.
The diadem rocks beneath the sword,
Too tired to strike, it breaks, for every god, in turn,
Will sleep in exile but for you, who with fiery breath
Replenishes the universe, returning the souls to their specters.
You are immortal, almighty Helios!
Master of my summits, father of Asclepius.”
Upon my mountain’s sleeping flanks
Come your fleeting flames of dawn.

Then imperial Palatine speaks:
 And in his rough accents, he speaks of the bright
 Clash of the shields and the battle cries.
 "I slept unaware, and when I awoke
 I was crushed under the sacred plow of Romulus
 And the elected gods called for the blood of Remus
 Which fertilized my breast-- and the harvest was Rome!
 Where therefore is my god, the mountain, or the man,
 Where the words of glory?"

Now comes another voice: I speak
 with humility and dreadful remembrance
 Of nameless tortures and dark mortal agonies.
 I am Golgotha, Brother of twins.
 On that day I felt, captive and trembling,
 A living God against my flesh inclining
 Thrust with a flaming sword,
 And in profound mute witness I saw a flaming cross
 Erected among the roaring people.
 O mountains! The gods demanded your blood,
 All for the sublime dream
 Of tears for forgiveness, the abyss
 Reached for the stars, the suns
 Surrounded His head with a radiant halo;
 His soft forehead was torn under an infamous crown,
 And I, black Golgotha, the field of this sinister crime,
 Who knew the footfalls of a God
 Remain still under the blue heavens of an eternal sun

[UU-71 7:55] (Appendix 245)

Within these lines, she combines sacred mythological and religious symbols in her references to the hills of Golgotha where Christ was crucified, as well as the mountains of Parnassus, Mount Sinai, and the Himalayas. She alludes to the Old Testament when she includes references to the tower of Babel, and she mixes these Christian images with pagan ones, such as the sun god Helios, Apollo, Ascepius, Palatine, Romulus and Remus. She references an unforgivable crime that incurs a debt that can never be repaid, and in doing so alludes to her own mission to rail against the perceived crime to her culture. Likening her role to the dumb and helpless hill, Golgotha, she situates herself as

the dumb witness to events and employs romantic imagery where nature is in sympathy with her cause speaks for the narrator.

Her poetry also exhibits a divergence from American writers, not only in theme and tone, but in aesthetics as well. She mourns the loss of her dear friend in her elegiac poem, "*In Graecium*" (1893) written in honor of Placide Canonge. Her lines are replete with loss and longing and punctuated with classical imagery and allusions. Note how this poem seems to belong to the Neo-Classical and Romantic periods rather than late nineteenth century America. She uses romantic metaphors and once again personifies nature in harmony with her spirits (in ancient Greek mythology, the cicada represented immortality and/or rebirth). She includes classical references to Helen, Hymette (Hymettus), Socrates, Pericles, Apsasia, and Alcibides (Alcibiades) in a mixture of pagan and Christian symbols:

The hand let go and dropped the fragile vessel
Once so full of mead, and the echoing vase
Is broken, spilling its fragrant liqueur.
Like Helen's violets, that fills our hearts
covering the mountains of Hymette,
Like the honey the bee carries
with its golden lance, full and restless
With its perfume, I will write my sacred poem to you,
And from my memories I will pluck
My verse, soft and sad, in this diaphanous hour . . .
When the flanks of the mountains come to the plains
In their coat of shadows, so far away,
Sheltered, shuddered in a harmonious unity,
Where Socrates laughed at the red elixir,
Where Pericles listened to Aspasia
With general Alcibides at his side. Come, now,
To the boundless banquet, and on your ivory chariot
Come to the place of spirits. This is the time of your glory,
Of desire and love. Your compatriots will come,

And these silent guests will circle your pale forehead
with branches of ivory and violets
And will crown your head with white bandlettes.
---In the distant hills the day climbs to its end, fleeting
Light floating on mountain lakes
Casting an amber reflection on your violet sepulcher,
Preparing your spirit. In the shadows, the cicadas begin the golden monochord
Of their vague rhythm while you sleep,
And when their chant is silenced, the moment
Becomes but smoke and the shiver of fevers,
Yet the day lingers against the constellations
While the flights of birds etch the sky
in the rising north winds.

Suddenly a strange cold comes over me
Blowing against the flame and against the phalanx
Where the flare of tombs ignites the granite
Which towards you inclines, and I resist and curse
For I saw the thunderbolt strike the trees
Illuminating how cold, how heavy, is this white coat of marble.

Three times the Angelus repeated the word, and my song begins its ending with a
sob [UU-71 7:54]. (Appendix 252)

After much suffering on earth, Canonge is welcomed home like a returning hero
to join the gods, and by placing him in this context, Queyrouze raises the level of French
culture and ideals embodied in the quintessential aristocratic and noble Canonge to
Parnassian heights. Thus, the French Creoles who waged and lost the battle of securing
hegemony in America would find, upon their deaths, their rewards in both pagan and
Christian terms. Canonge would join the great democratic leader of Athens, Pericles who
lives in eternity with his consort Aspasia and his war general Alcibiades. Queyrouze
likens her verse to the honey produced in the mountains of Hymettus near Athens, and
when she notes that Pericles “listened to Aspasia” she may be inferring that she is like
Aspasia who had been well educated by tutors employed by her father and who had

earned both admiration (notably by Socrates) and castigation in her adopted Athens. Her poem, therefore, adheres to the principles set forth by de Stael who characterized southern European literature as having pagan influences, but this poem also crosses those boundaries by including the religiosity of the north, for Canonge would also earn his Catholic everlasting reward as the tolling of the Angelus bells indicates, a prayer that asks that “it be done according to thy word,” and “that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.”

In spite of the hopeful message of this poem, Queyrouze often succumbs to melancholy. “*Amor*” is a good example of Queyrouze’s isolation, sadness, and loss, when she almost audibly sighs, “*Verser autant de pleurs, verser autant de sang . . . Puis mourir sous tes pas en rêvant que tu m’aimes* (“to bleed so many tears, to tear so much blood . . . then to die under the steps of my friends.” On many occasions, she superimposes the loss of her culture onto the passing of friends. One such example is “*A mon amie, Magda Turpin*” (1891). Continuing her battle imagery, she also makes references to the “enemy” culture and in the romantic tradition, likens her departed friend’s eyes to stars and her life to a meteor. This is one of the few indications of Queyrouze’s close friendships to women:

Yesterday I cried for you, today I sing for you.
Have you felt my tears upon your sleeping face?
Have you heard my voice? Your heart must have shuddered
When your mother spoke to you softly and imploringly.

Do you breathe again? Your friends
Speak of your valiant soul. The teeth of the enemy can do no more
.....

You eyes are closed like those fading stars
Under a brilliant sun, but the meteor
Makes your face resplendent and raises you above the pain [UU-71 7:55].
(Appendix 274)

In "*A Hyacinthe Loiseau*," she mourns the loss of a dear friend and quotes the French Romantic poet, Alfred de Musset who speaks of suffering over the tomb. She again personifies nature and describes how the flowers and birds who witness her pain speak to her. True to romantic traditions, she finds truth and wisdom in Nature:

. . . And the flowers in the path who saw my distress,
Said: Where are you going with such grief pressing upon you,
Is it he who you go to see this morning?-- The sparrow,
bantering as he perched on his branch, shouted at me:
What pain do you have? Is it for some man?
We do not sulk here for we have eaten the apples
Of our garden . . .
.....
Who do you look for? asked the pale Chrysanthemum,
--the flower of the death. I look for a tomb. And the flower
Answered me: His pain is now quiet
But now it begins for you . . .
.....
Alas! You cry at the death of others
But they sleep without hatred or remorse
Do you not know that it is necessary to suffer so that a dark joy
Can rise in your heart?
Your friend is made well again by his leaving
When he answered the call of the dark archangel
. . . . our flesh deceives us,
For only death is true . . . [UU-70 6:45]

In "*Impromptu*" (March 20, 1898) she speaks to the living, but her tone is still elegiac as she responds to a passerby who had once been a close and dear friend. Her reference to Mars is in keeping with her predilection to maintain classical images, and

this underscores her persistent war imagery. She also includes her pervasive death imagery in by her inclusion of the term “funeral dirge:”

I see you coming, and I fear, there will be some embarrassment,
And an uncomfortable surprise. I see under your arm,
Pressed against your side,
the dreaded walking cane.
Perhaps I will tell you we shall remain friends.
But I know Mars has an old rival. And my heart will gasp
For one instant before it rights itself.
This will require Virtue in me,
For this is only my wounded pride; thus I will
Dispatch remembrances of the Past,
Of one brief embrace, one without reproach.
But the blessed Past, like a returning ghost,
Tries to speak to the present about love and faith.
But I will vow to respect the laws of Virtue
And to nourish my soul as well as its vessel.
So that the lasting heat of the Past shall expire.

Because I now know your path
I can rest without fear or dread
And in a forlorn funereal dirge
Forsake your lie for my law [UU-70 6:45] (Appendix 256)

Years later, the theme of sadness still marks her work as demonstrated in “*Agonie*” written in 1911:

. . . So when were the dreams of souls broken?
What insidious worm began to gnaw at its core?
Which parasite drank up the sap of its heart
and silenced the music of the heavens? [UU-71 7:55]. (Appendix 237)
The “worm” and the “parasite” that “drank up the sap of its heart” is a thinly

veiled reference to the Anglo-American culture that she perceived as the enemy. Unlike mainstream American women writers who were trying to effect change within the patriarchal social system, Queyrouze was situating herself in opposition to that culture.

Moreover, she ignored the marketable and widely circulated genres of the novel and short story and continued to publish French poetry, which not widely accepted as a commercially viable or influentially significant endeavor. By writing in a genre and language that could no longer reach the public, she was withdrawing from the flow of American life and assuring her own obscurity. As Lafcadio Hearn had advised her, the new direction of literature was towards realism, which was a literary doctrine calling for reality and truth in ordinary life, but she ignored him. George Washington Cable, Bret Harte, Kate Chopin, Mark Twain, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Sarah Orne Jewett were advancing past the local color movement towards this new frontier, one that traveled into the interior psychological landscape of their characters. Instead, Queyrouze turned backwards and dedicated her poetry to Hugo, Lamartine, de Musset, and those French Romantics whose rise and decline and already been chronicled long before she was born.

This comparison between American and French literary tradition raises a question as to the inclusion of Queyrouze in the category of an American writer. This query assumes that there are established criteria for the elements comprising a national literature, and this dissertation does not presume to attempt to define an American writer. Instead, as Tunnell says, I will harbor no “delusions of definitiveness;” rather, I will pose questions and merely suggest answers (7). If one believes that an American writer lives in America, then Queyrouze fills the requirement, but that criterion would eliminate many ex-patriots whom we claim in our canon. If one includes a language requirement, that would exclude all non-Anglophone writers, but our national literature claims many languages. Moreover, the definition does not rest upon style or subject matter. With such

nebulous criteria, the answer is elusive. There have been many works that have addressed the composite of the American writer, and rather than provide an exhaustive analysis, instead, I will borrow from Sarah Orne Jewett, who says in “At Home from Church:” “I somehow feel as if shut out/ From some mysterious temple” (678). I suggest only that in order to enter the great cathedral of American literature, writers must first be permitted through the gates and then allowed to join the congregation and join the discourse. Without that opportunity, their voices will never be heard nor will they have influence. Within this great hall, writers share a sense of common purpose and engage in a dialectical discourse—their work has a synchronic and diachronic quality wherein the writers speak to each other and give nod to those who have influenced them. Thus, they are members of a congregation, and when they rise to the pulpit to speak, often the choir will take up their refrain. This is not the case for Queyrouze, for while she expressed her opinions publicly, hers was another church altogether, one that was romantic, French, and Catholic, instead of realistic, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant. She was not consciously attempting to seek membership in the great hall of American literature; her pilgrimage was towards a disparate self definition. If one were to ask Gilman, Freeman, Jewett, Chopin, and Cable if they were American writers, no doubt the answer would be yes. Thus, the act of becoming an American writer is often determined as much by personal choice as it is selection, but Queyrouze chose an alternative. Her efforts were devoted to trying to write her culture into history by the force of her pen. Her love and her passion lay elsewhere, and she expressed this with poignancy in her poem, “*A La France*”:

Oh France, I wish, like a jealous lover
To find new words in an unknown language
In accents as profound and soft as clouds

To speak of love. . . .
I would like the time to come to welcome night
in my sleep I could feel upon my flesh
The embrace and kisses of a spouse.
Before my soul climbs to the light
With ears trembling, and tearful eyes
That wake to the frail light of morning, blue
as violets, and feel the blood in my veins
Like sparkling grapes pressed into wine
To fill to overflowing our loving cup [UU-71 7:54]. (Appendix 251)

This poem clearly expresses her love for her imagined motherland, but while Queyrouze may not lay claim to the title of American writer, we must permit her to enter the gates of the cathedral we call American literature and allow her to rise to the pulpit to speak, at last, of the experiences of those who lost the battle for autonomy in the great flood of American expansion. Queyrouze provides for us, in the words of Gottfried von Herder, a sample of “poetry’s gallery of diverse way of thinking, diverse aspirations, and diverse desires” (143). Through her, we can “come to know periods and nations more intimately that we can through . . . studying political and military history” (143). Furthermore, Herder argues that we can learn much about a culture from its poetry: “We can learn about its way of thinking, its desires and wants, the ways it rejoiced, and the ways it was guided by its principles or its inclinations” (143). Greenblatt and Gallagher reinforce this by describing the value applying a new historicist template to literary study. The benefit is that scholars are allowed to follow “the social energies that circulate very broadly through culture” and to see “the entire range of diverse expression by which a culture manifests itself” (13). By moving “beyond the confines of the canonical garden” (14), we are be able to see the “vastness of the textual archive, and with that vastness an aesthetic appreciation of the individual instance” (16), and thereby we are able to

acknowledge that the “house of imagination has many mansions” (12) and that there are many missing pieces in the *mosaïque* of American literature. American writers often have spoken to the ideal of potential and relied on the possibilities expressed by Emerson, Dickinson, Whitman and Thoreau, or have believed that like Ishmael, they would survive adventure and adversity to tell their tales, or like Huck, they could escape the confines of society to “light out for the territories.” In the nineteenth-century, many Americans believed in possibility and promise, and theirs was a dream of expansion and tomorrow, but for others, like Queyrouze, theirs was a tale of loss and a dream of the past.

CONCLUSION

Leona Queyrouze's work articulates the stages of grief-- those of denial, acceptance, and sorrow--which indicates her awareness that she was a part of a dying culture. Even as she held onto it, she also knew that its days were numbered, just as the days of her life were numbered. In her poetry she eulogized her dead friends who had once been a part of her salon. Images of death permeate her poetry, suggesting that she knew she was seeing the last of the French Creoles' carefully constructed and nurtured world. With the passing of each one of her friends and family, her mother and father, General Beauregard, Paul Morphy, Placide Canonge, Charles Gayarré; her husband, Pierre Barel, she was left increasingly alone until by the end of her life, she was holding onto to futile romantic dream. Evidence of this can be found in her unpublished and highly sentimental short story written in 1933 entitled "The Flowers of Nirvana: The Love of Two Souls."

In this brief story written in large script on small pieces of paper (that probably once were pinned to the walls in her room as she described in one of her interviews) Queyrouze tells the story of a young man who is compelled, for reasons he does not understand, to go to New Orleans. There at a boarding house, he meets an elderly but still radiant woman. Through their long talks over the next several weeks, they learn that their souls are connected and that their spiritual love transcends time and place. This was the answer he sought, and when he leaves her he does so with a mixture of sadness and contentment. Queyrouze wrote this piece while nearly blind, and this gradual loss of her sight coincided with dimming of a time and a place that was now only a cherished memory, her dream of the past.

George Washington Cable describes the death of the Creole culture in *The Creoles of Louisiana*, saying that social “change carried [the Creole] nearer and nearer towards the current of American ideas and absorption into their flood, which bore too much the semblance of annihilation. Hold back as he might, the transformation was appallingly swift” (254). In a prophetic farewell novel to New Orleans, Lafcadio Hearn likewise addresses the death of the French Creole culture. This novel, *Chita*, describes the disappearance in 1856 of an island called *L’Isle Dernière* off the coast of Louisiana. Much like Grand Isle, it had been a favorite destination for many French Creoles in the mid-nineteenth century, and they often congregated there to bathe in the sea and to attend social gatherings. Such was the case one August night when partygoers, unaware that a storm was approaching, attended a ball at *l’Isle Dernière*. A ship captain, who had been unable to warn them, docked just in time to witness the storm as it completely submerged the island, drowning all but a few and sweeping all of their belongings away to be scattered by the currents. Strangely enough, Hearn’s account proved to be prophetic, for what he describes is analogous to the disappearance of the French Creole culture in New Orleans that began its decline towards the middle of the nineteenth century.

Joy Jackson notes that “from the 1880s on, the Creoles were a declining ethnic group and no longer a vital factor in politics . . . in its twilight years” (14). By the time that Cable described the Creoles culture and the *Vieux Carré*, Jackson says, their “way of life was only a museum piece which would pass out of general existence within thirty years” (14). Queyrouze was a woman who was out of place and time---she no longer lived in a world where her culture could thrive and her literary endeavors were no longer relevant to the direction that America was taking—a vibrant county that was moving

towards industrialization and commerce, leaving the agricultural riches of cotton and plantations behind and the evil of slavery with them.

The economic reasons for the French Creole decline began long before the Civil war and Reconstruction. Jackson states that “actually the troubles against which New Orleans commerce struggled in the 1880s and 1890s had their roots in antebellum times. Her supremacy as the trade mart of the Mississippi Valley had been challenged early in the century by the building of canals and in the 1850s by railroads” (208). She continues, saying that “no other major port showed such a radical change in trade patterns” as did New Orleans from 1894-1898 (212- 213).

Cable offers other reasons and muses that “it is hard to understand, looking back from the present, how so extravagant a mistake could have been made by wise minds” (241). He estimates that they were blinded by their current wealth and did not realize that with the opening of the Erie Canal, the westward expansion, the railroads, and the advancing steam technology that their livelihood was threatened. Not only that, the basis of their wealth, slavery, was more than a social evil, it created for the Creole “easy fortune-getting” and spread “intellectual indolence” (242). Their mindset had a kind of “invincible provincialism” (245) that prevented them from realizing that the “improved transportation, denser settlements, [and] labor-saving machinery” of the rest of the nation was leaving them behind (249). Cable accuses the Creole of “too much false pride against mercantile pursuits [. . . and of a] social exclusiveness” that ultimately led to a downfall (251). He summarizes their situation:

In [many] American cities, American thought prevailed, and the incoming foreigner accepted it. In New Orleans American thought was foreign, unwelcome, disparaged by the unaspiring satirical Creole, and often apologized for by the

American, who found himself a minority in a combination of social forces oftener in sympathy with European ideas than with the moral energies and the enthusiastic and venturesome enterprise of the New World (252).

The Creoles consistently and self-consciously separated themselves from the American culture. Cable indicates that the “rich Creole, both of plantation and town, still drew his inspiration from the French tradition,--not from books,--and sought both culture and pastime in Paris” (260). In addition, the Creoles depended too much on land and slaves for riches. In the rest of the nation there stood a “triumph of machinery over slavery that could not be retrieved, save possibly through a social revolution so great and apparently so ruinous that the mention of it kindled a white heat of public exasperation” (254). Even so, among their members were those who brought them fame and infamy, and Cable recites a list of illustrious Creoles: one was the “Minister of War in France . . . another sat in the Spanish Courts; another became a Spanish Lieutenant-General . . . Jean Jaques Audubon . . . Louis Gottschalk . . . General Beauregard” (315). Not surprisingly, this is a *mosaïque* of people who, when viewed from afar, develops into a panorama of intriguing complexity, but one thing they shared was an understanding that they were members of a dying culture.

Tregle’s “Early New Orleans Society: A Reappraisal” shows that the Creoles had no defense against the incoming Americans with “their impressive education, capital, resources, and business acumen [which] enabled these newcomers to take control rather quickly The Creole businessmen were no match for the Yankee entrepreneurs” (Logsdon and Hirsch 91-92), and they were “absorbed and made to submit to the fate of a conquered race . . . with a rapidity and thoroughness . . . much greater than that with

which the Romans transformed the people who submitted to their arms” (Tregle 161). “It [was] a race passing into the valley of shade and oblivion” (162), sometimes by business, often by marriage. The Creoles culture failed to thrive because it was “set in its tradition, enveloped in its memories, [living] almost entirely in the past, a stranger to the progress and spirit of the times” (168). All that is left are the architectural relics, residual public festivals, and marketable iconic trinkets.

When one visits New Orleans today, one can still see the remnants of that lost culture in the French Quarter which holds a particular “foreign” atmosphere. The identifiable French Creoles have disappeared, but their legacy is found in the narrow, crowded streets lined with wrought iron balconied structures hiding interior courtyards, and one can still walk past the home where the Queyrouzes once lived. There is an air about the Quarter that still remains defiantly un-American, and one cannot help but pause to reflect on the people and the place that once belonged to a foreign territory.

These were the streets that Leona Queyrouze walked, and the *Vieux Carré* was the Frenchtown she cherished. In spite of the social and political upheaval, her ultimate goal was to safeguard her way of life, regardless whether she was progressive or traditional. With the support and contribution of her salon, she quixotically dedicated her efforts to the preservation of her culture and attempted to use the force of her pen to keep her customs, traditions, and love of French literature alive. Even as she failed, her attempt was valiant and worth recognition. Those who criticize the Creoles for their social injustice must also acknowledge that each culture is more than the sum of its parts, for as Fredric Jameson argues, a cultural period does not express a “unified inner truth” (27). Queyrouze is an illustrious shard in the *mosaïque* of her culture, and within her, as in any

enlightened individual, there is a mosaic of sensibilities, aspirations, hopes and dreams. To study Queyrouze, we are engaged in a “project of salvation” (20) as expressed by Jameson, and thus we are able to access history in ways that are unavailable to us “except in textual form” (35).

The goal of this project was to make Queyrouze available to a modern audience so that she may be studied from various critical perspectives and to assist in providing a more complete understanding of the Creole culture. Through an ever-widening critical lens, I have attempted to place Queyrouze in the context of Creole identity, her environment, salon culture, politics, ethnicity, and literary movements, in order to provide a portrait of the Creole society’s parochial retreat that precluded its viability. There is a recognition of this cultural loss in Queyrouze’s poem, “*le Tisserand*”:

*Sur le vaste horizon la treme était tendue;
Purlant je ne vis point la main du tisserand
Et j’entnudis gronder un echo de torrent
Au fond du noir allence; es je vis, éperdue*

On the vast horizon, the hand of the weaver extends
I do not see the hand of the weaver,
But I hear the groans and the echoes of the torrent
And I fear the black wing, where I see that all is lost [UU-71 7:56].

She expresses similar sentiments in “*Vision*” written in 1885 and read before the Academy of Sciences in Bordeaux, France:

I will not hear the cries of nations
like an expanding torrent, invading the lands
ravaging the harvest, with hope dying in pain,
brutally crushed back into stony furrows.
So swiftly time hurries, its winds destroying
the ripened fields of enterprise, ideals and hopes,

running in its course all joy and suffering
of bewildered people, crushed like chaff in the whirlwind
of eternity 1885 C.R.A.L. 40 [UU-71 6:45]. (Appendix 276)

This expresses her ineffable grief over the inevitable death of her constructed culture, “crushed like chaff in the whirlwind.” Francis Parkman writes that “the French dominion is a memory of the past; and when we evoke its departed shades; they rise upon us from their graves in strange, romantic guise” (Woodward *The Future of the Past* 340).

Leona Queyrouze serves as an individual example of the collective demise of the Creole who failed to see the signs of change and to adjust to the New World. Her fate as well as the fate of the French Creoles raises the question that many ethnic groups face today of how to retain cultural markers while becoming part of the dominant society. In many ways, this leaves us with a paradox, for it appears impossible to attain both disparate identity and acculturation simultaneously. One dynamic calls for ethnic discretion and the other assimilation, two opposing forces on the same magnet with the power to attract on one hand, and repel on the other. Perhaps the only answer I can offer to this dilemma is to respond with responsible scholarship in the spirit of new historicism by my commitment to add a silent and forgotten voice to the ongoing human conversation. To retrieve a lost cultural moment will enhance our understanding of the process of Americanization on a doomed social construct, a small island of French Creole culture, swept away by the sea of America, and that it can heighten our awareness of the responsibilities that come from acknowledging our own history.

WORKS CITED

Original manuscripts:

The Lafcadio Hearn Collection Special Collections Division, *Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University*.
New Orleans, Louisiana.

Queyrouze Papers. Special Collections. MSS UU 68-71 #1201, 1278, 1314, 1323, 1335 and X 97-98.
Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections. Hill Memorial Library.
Louisiana State University. Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Interviews:

Cressy, Adele Queyrouze. Personal Interview. 1996. 1244 Carrolton Ave. Metairie
LA 70005.
(Interview conducted at the home of her mother, Mrs. Harold Queyrouze).

Queyrouze, Mrs. Harold. Personal Interview. 1996. 6535 Louis XIV New Orleans LA
70124. (She was married to Maxim Queyrouze's son and knew Leona).

Print Sources:

L'Abeille de la Nouvelle Orleans. New Orleans, Louisiana.

Ayers, Edward L. *The Promise of the New South after Reconstruction.* New York:
Oxford UP, 1992.

Baggett, James Alex. *The Scalawags.* Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 2003.

Barthelemy, Anthony G. "Light, Bright and Damn near White: Race, the Politics of
Genealogy, and the Strange Case of Susie Guillory" Kein. 2000.

Bauer, Dale M. and Philip Gould, Eds. *Nineteenth Century Women's Writing*,
Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2001.

Bell, Caryn Cossé. *Revolution, Romanticism and the Afro-Creole Protest Tradition
in Louisiana 1718-1868.* Baton Rouge, LA: LSU Press, 1997.

---. "Une Chimère": The Freedmen's Bureau in Creole New Orleans." Cimbala
and Miller. 140-160.

- Berger, Harris M. and Giovanna P. Del Negro. *Identity and Everyday Life: Essays in the Study of Folklore, Music, and Popular Culture*. Middleton, Conn.: Wesleyan UP, 2004.
- Bendix, Regina. "Tourism and cultural Displays: *Inventing Traditions for Whom?*" *Journal of American Folklore*. (1989): 102:404. 131-146.
- Bisland, Elizabeth. *The Life and Letters of Lafcadio Hearn Vol 1*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 1906.
- Blassingame, John W. *Black New Orleans: 1860-1880*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1973.
- Cable, George Washington. *Creoles and Cajuns: Stories of Old Louisiana*. Ed. Arlin Turner. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965.
- . *The Creoles of Louisiana*. Gretna, La.: Pelican, 2000.
- . "The Freedman's Case in Equity." *Century Magazine* XXIX. Jan 1885. 409-18.
- . *The Granddissimes*. Gretna, LA: Pelican, 2001.
- . *Old Creole Days*. New York: C. Scribner, 1921.
- . "Sieur George." *Creoles and Cajuns: Stories of Old Louisiana*. Ed. Arlin Turner. Gloucester, Mass: Peter Smith, 1965. Originally published 1873.
- . *The Silent South*. New York: Charles Scribner, 1885.
- . "We of the South." *Century Magazine* XXIX November 1884. 152.
- . "Who are the Creoles?" *Century Magazine* XXV January 1883. 395.
- Castellanos, Henry. *New Orleans As It Was: Episodes of Louisiana Life*. Forward by Charles L. Dufour. Gretna: Pelican, 1990.
- Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*. New York: Avon, 1972.
- . *Selected Stories*. New York: Penguin, 1986.
- Cimbala, Paul A. and Randall M. Miller eds. *The Freedmen's Bureau and Reconstruction*. New York: Fordham UP, 1999.
- Clément, Catherine. *Opera: or the Undoing of Women*. Translated by Betsy Wing, Forward by Susan McClary. Minneapolis, U Minnesota P, 1988.
- Coleman, Will H. "The French Market." *Sketchbook and Guide to New Orleans and Environs*. 1885. De Caro. 1998.
- Comptes-Rendus Athénée Louisianais (C.R.A.L.)*. *Athénée Louisianais*. New Orleans, Louisiana.
- Cott, Jonathon. *Wandering Ghost: The Odyssey of Lafcadio Hearn*. New York: Knopf, 1991.

Cressy, Adele Queyrouze. Letter to the author. August 8, 1996.

Dawson, Sarah, Morgan. "Excerpt from *a Confederate Girl's Dairy*."
De Caro. 1998. 261-266.

De Caro, Frank. Ed. *Louisiana Sojourns: Travelers' Tales and Literary Journeys*.
Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1998.

---. "Unrivaled Charms: Folklore, Non-Fiction, and Lafcadio Hearn's 'Creole'
Years." Joseph Schick Lectures at Indiana State University. December 2002.

Denommé, Robert T. *Nineteenth-Century French Romantic Poets*. Harry T. Moore,
ed. London: Feffer & Simons, 1969.

Dickinson, Emily. Hollander. 583.

Disheroon-Green, Suzanne and Lisa Abney. *Songs of the Reconstructing South:
Building Literary Louisiana 1865-1945*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 2002.

Domínguez, Virginia. *White by Definition: Social Classifications in Creole Louisiana*.
New Brunswick, Rutgers UP, 1986.

Donovan, Josephine. *New England Color Literature: A Woman's Tradition*.
New York: Frederick Ungar P, 1983.

---. *Sarah Orne Jewett*. New York: Frederick Ungar P, 1980.

Dorman, James H. "Louisiana's 'Creoles of Color': Ethnicity, Marginality, and Identity."
Social Science Quarterly 73 (1992:) 616.

Dorson, Richard. *American Folklore & the Historian*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1971.
---. ed. *Folklore and Folklife*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1972.

Eble, Kenneth. "A Forgotten Novel: Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*."
Western Humanities Review 10: 3 (Summer 1956): 261-69.

Elfenbein, Anna Shannon. *Women on the Color Line: Evolving Stereotypes and the
Writings of George Washington Cable, Grace King, Kate Chopin*.
Charlottesville: UP Virginia, 1980.

Ewing, Quincy. "The Heart of the Race Problem." *Atlantic Monthly CIII*. March 1909.
389-97.

Foner, Eric. *Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation And Its Legacy*. Baton Rouge: LSU
Press, 1983.

Fortier, Alcée. "The American Domination Part II 1861-1903." *History of Louisiana*
Vol 4. New York: Manzi, Joyant, Succesors of Goupil & Co., Paris 1904.

- Foucault, Michael. "The Art of Telling the Truth." *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault /Habermas Debate*. Ed. Michael Kelly. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994. 139-148.
- . "Critical Theory/Intellectual Theory." *Critique and Power*. Kelly, 1994. 110-139.
- . *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Ed. Donald F. Bouchard. Tr. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1977.
- Freeman, Mary Eleanor Wilkins. *Selected Stories of Mary E. Wilkins Freeman*. Ed. Marjorie Pryse. New York: Norton, 1983.
- . *The Shoulders of Atlas*. New York: Arno Press, 1908.
- Friedman, Lawrence J., *The White Savage: Racial Fantasies in the Postbellum South*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice Hall, 1970.
- Ganobcsik-Williams, Lisa. "The Intellectualism of Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Evolutionary Perspectives on Race, Ethnicity, and Class." Rudd, Gough. 16-41
- Gayarré, Charles. "The Creoles of History and the Creoles of Romance." Public address at Tulane April 25, 1885.
- . "La race Latine en Louisiane" Speech before the *Athénée*.
- . "Les Grandissimes"
- Gilbert, Sandra and Susan Gubar describe in *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1984.
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *Herland*. New York: Pantheon Book, 1979.
- . *The Later Poetry of Charlotte Perkins Gilman*. Ed. Denise D. Knight. Newark: U Delaware P, 1996.
- Glasser, Leah Blatt. *In a Closet Hidden: The Life and Work of Mary E. Wilkins Freeman*. Amherst: U Massachusetts P, 1996.
- Golden, Catherine J. "'Written to Drive Nails With:' Recalling the Early Poetry of Charlotte Perkins Gilman." Rudd, Gough. 243-266.
- Golden, Catherine J. and Joanna Schneider Zangrando, Eds. *The Mixed Legacy of Charlotte Perkins Gilman*. Newark, New Jersey: U Delaware P, 2000.
- Grant, Michael and John Hazel. *Who's Who in Classical Mythology*. New York: Oxford UP, 1993.

- Hagiwara, Junko. "Lafcadio Hearn and Leona Queyrouze." *Lafcadio Hearn Journal*. Vol 1:2. (The Lafcadio Hearn Collection Special Collections Division, Howard Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University).
- Hair, William Ivy. *Bourbonism and Agrarian Protest, Louisiana Politics 1877-1900*. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1969.
- Hall, Alice Petry, ed. *Critical Essays on Kate Chopin*. New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1996.
- Hall, Gwendolyn Midlo. *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: the Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth Century*. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1995. 157.
- Handler, Richard and Jocelyn Linnekin. "Tradition, Genuine and Spurious." *Journal Of American Folklore*. (1984): 97:385. 273-290.
- Haws, Robert, ed. *The Age of Segregation: Race Relations in the South, 1890-1945*. Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1978.
- Hearn, Lafcadio. *Chita: A Memory of Last Island* (copyright 1889). New York: Harper, 1898. Republished by Scholarly Press in St. Clair Shores Michigan in 1970.
- . *Fantastics and Other Fancies*. Ed. Charles Woodward Hutson. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914.
- . "Grandissimes." Turner. 1980. 8-9
- . "Los Criollos" *Jewell's Crescent City Illustrated*. 1874. 198-200.
- . *Lafcadio Hearn's Creole Cook Book*. Gretna, La.: Pelican, 1990.
- . "the Scenes of Cables' Romances." Turner. 1980. 53-62.
(Gift from the Queyrouze family).
- Herder, Gottfried von. *Against Pure Reason: Writings on Religion, Language, and History*. Trans.,ed. Marcia Bunge. Minneapolis: Fortress P, 1993.
- Hirsch, Arnold R and Joseph Logsdon, eds. *Creole New Orleans: Race and Americanization*. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1992.
- Hirsch, Arnold A. "Simply a Matter of Black and White: The Transformation of Race and Politics in Twentieth-Century New Orleans." Hirsch and Logsdon. 262-321.
- Hollander, John. *American Poetry: the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Library of America College, 1996.
- Howard, June. *Publishing the Family*. Durham, Duke UP, 2001.
- Humm, Maggie. *Feminist Criticism*. New York: St. Martin's, 1986.

- Hutson, Charles Woodward, ed. *Fantastics and Other Fancies* by Lafcadio Hearn.
Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1914.
- Jackson, Joy J. *New Orleans in the Gilded Age: Politics and Urban Progress 1880-1896*.
Baton Rouge, LSU Press, 1969.
- Jameson, Fredric. *The Cultures of Globalization*. Eds. Masao Miyoshi.
and Fredric Jameson. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1998.
- . "On Interpretation: Literature as a Socially Symbolic Act."
Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially symbolic Act.
Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1981.
- Jewett, Sarah Orne. *The Country of the Pointed Firs and Other Stories*.
New York: Anchor Books, 1989.
- . Hollander (1996): 678.
- Jordan, Rosan Augusta and Frank de Caro. "In This Folk-Lore Land:" *Race, Class,
Identity, and Folklore Studies in Louisiana*. *Journal of American Folklore* 109
(431): 1996. 31-59.
- Kein, Sybil, Ed. *Creole: The History and Legacy of Louisiana's Free People of Color*.
Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 2000.
- Keyes, Frances Parkinson. *The Chess Players*. New York: Farrar,
Straus and Cudahy, 1960.
- Kilcup, Karen L. and Thomas S. Edwards, Eds. *Jewett and Her Contemporaries:
Reshaping the Canon*. Gainesville, FL: UP Florida, 1999.
- King, Edward. "Interview with Charles Gayarré." *Scribner's Monthly*, VI.
November 1873. 13.
- King, Grace. *Creole Families of New Orleans*. Baton Rouge: Claitors, 1971.
A reprint of the 1921 edition.
- . *Memories of a Southern Woman of Letters*. Freeport, NY: Books for Library P,
1971.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. "Mistaken Dichotomies." *Journal of American Folklore*.
(1988): 101:404 140-155.
- Knight, Denise D. "'But O My Heart:' The Private Poetry of Charlotte Perkins
Gilman." Rudd, Gough. 267-288.

- Kuilan, Susie Scifres. "The 'All-Seeing Eye' in Grace King's *Balcony Stories*." Disheroon and Abney. 99-108.
- La Chance, Paul F. "The Foreign French." Hirsch and Logsdon. 1992. 101-131.
- Lafcadio Hearn Society USA* Department of English and Comparative Literature.
University of Cincinnati OH.
- Lawrence, John H. "Exhibition Opens: A Gathering of Works by Marie Adrien Persac." *The Historic New Orleans Collections Quarterly*. XIX:1 (Winter): 2001. 2.
- Logan, Rayford., ed. *W.E.B. Du Bois: A Profile*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1971.
- Logsdon, Joseph and Caryn Cossé Bell. "The Americanization of Black New Orleans, 1850-1900." Hirsch and Logsdon. 1992. 210-262.
- Long, Lisa A. "The Postbellum Reform Writings of Rebecca Harding Davis and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps." Bauer and Gould. 262-307.
- Loomis, Ormond H., Coordinator. *Cultural Conservations: The Protection of Cultural Heritage in the United States*. Library of Congress. Washington DC: American Folklife Center, 1983.
- Lowenthal, David. *The Past is a Foreign Country*. New York: Cambridge UP, 1985.
- Macrae, David. *The American at Home*. New York: Dutton, 1952.
- Magill, John. "Persac's Canal Street." *The Historic New Orleans Collections Quarterly* XIX:1 (Winter): 2001. 2.
- Martin, Joan M. "Plaçage and the Louisiana *Gens de Couleur Libre*: How Race and Sex Defined the Lifestyles of Free Women of Color." Kein. 2000.
- McWilliams, Vera. *Lafcadio Hearn*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1946.
- Menke, Pamela, Glenn. "Behind the "White Veil:" Alice Dunbar-Nelson, Creole Color, and *The Goodness of St. Rocque*." Disheroon and Abney. 77-87.
- Mercier, Alfred. "Progress of the French Language" ("*Progrès de la langue Francaise*") *Les Compte-Rendus*. 1883.
- Meyering, Sheryl L. Ed. *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: the Woman and Her Work*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research P, 1989.

- Miller, Randall. M. "'The Enemy Within'" Some Effects of Foreign Immigration on Antebellum Southern Cities" in *Southern Studies XXIV* 1985. 30-53.
- Mills, Sara. *Michael Foucault*. New York: Routledge, 2003
- Nelson, Dana, D. "Women in Public." Bauer and Gould. 38-68.
- Nishizaki, Ichiro. "Newly Discovered Letters from Lafcadio Hearn to Dr. Rudolph Matas." *Ochanomizu University Studies in Arts and Culture* March 8, 1956. 90-91.
- Noske, Frits. *French Song from Berlioz to Duparc*. Trans. Rita Benton. New York: Dover, 1970.
- Oring, Elliott., ed. *Folk Groups and Folk Genres: An Introduction*. Logan, Utah: Utah State UP, 1986.
- Painter, Nell Irvin. *Standing at Armageddon: The United States 1877-1919*. New York: Norton, 1987.
- Parkman, Francis. *Count Frontenac and New France under Louis XIV: France and England in North America, part 5th*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1902.
- Payne, James Robert, Ed. "George Washington Cable's 'My Politics': Context and Revision of a Southern Memoir." *Multicultural Autobiography: American Lives*. Knoxville: U Tennessee P, 1992. 94-113.
- Pollard, Percival. *Their Day in Court*. New York: Neal Publishers, 1909.
- Queyrouze, Leona. (Constant Beauvais). "Ad Pannam." 1896.
- . "Agonie." September, 1911.
- . "Amor" n.d.
- . "Allegorie: Pensée d'un Créole." *L'Abeille*. June 21, 1891.
- . "Arrigo Boito." *L'Abeille*. December 23, 1894.
- . "Atlas." *L'Abeille*. 1901.
- . "Caryatis." *L'Abeille*, March 3, 1898.
- . "Ce qu'ont dit les Montagnes." 1911.
- . "Charles Gayarré." *C.R.A.L.* November 1887. 443.
- . "le Desir." *Comptes-Rendus Athénée Louisianais (C.R.A.L.)* March, 1885 40. (and in *Le Diamant*. March 19, 1887).
- . "Fantome d'Occident." *L'Abeille*. December 23, 1894.
- . "First and Last Days of Paul Morphy."
(Unpublished manuscript is housed at the Williams Research Center in the Historic New Orleans Collection, 410 Chartres, New Orleans).
- . "A La France." *L'Abeille*. 1892.

- . "In Graecium." *L'Abeille*. January 22, 1893.
- . *The Idyl: Reminiscences of Lafcadio Hearn*. Tokyo, Japan: Hokuseido Press, 1932.
- . "Imprecatio." *L'Abeille*. May 3, 1891.
- . "Impromptu." Manuscript. March 20, 1898.
- . "Lolotte." *C.R.A.L.* 1886. 216.
- . "Nocturne." December, 1901.
- . "a Magda Turpin." *L'Abeille*. May 1891.
- . "a Ma Mère." *C.R.A.L.* September, 1886. 214.
- . "a l'Opera." *L'Abeille*. 1886.
- . "Ad Pennam" n.d.
- . "Parce nocere." *Crusader*. December 14, 1894.
- . "Phyrne." *L'Abeille*. n.d.
- . "le Regret." *C.R.A.L.* September 1885. 227.
- . "Response." *L'Abeille*. May 27, 1887.
- . "Resurge." *L'Abeille*. December 25, 1908.
- . "Solitude." *L'Abeille*. 1897.
- . "Somniavi." *L'Abeille*. December 25, 1908.
- . "Sonnet." *L'Abeille*. 1896.
- . "Suite Dépeches." *L'Abeille*. n.d.
- . "Sur une Pensée donnée." *C.R.A.L.* 322.
- . "Le Tisserand." *L'Abeille*. n.d.
- . "Vision." *C.R.A.L.* January, 1885, 40. (republished on July 9, 1885 in the French newspaper, *le Nouveliste de la Gironde*).

Racevskis, Karlis. *Michael Foucault and the Subversion of Intellect*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1983.

Rankin, David C. ed. "Introduction." *My Passage at the New Orleans Tribune: A Memoir of the Civil War Era* by Jean-Charles Houzeau. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1984.

Reichardt, Mary R. *Mary Wilkins Freeman: A Study of the Short Fiction*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1997.

Reilly, Joseph J. "Stories by Kate Chopin." *The Commonweal* 25 (26 March): 1937. 606-7.

Reinfeld, Fred and Andrew Soltis. *Morphy Chess Masterpieces*. New York: McMillan, 1974.

Rodrigue, John C. "The Freedmen's Bureau and Wage labor in the Louisiana Sugar Region." Cimballa and Miller. 193-218.

- Roman, Alfred. *The Military Operations of General Beauregard 1861 to 1865: including a brief personal sketch and a narrative of his services in the war with Mexico 1846-8. v1-v2*. New York: Harper & Bros., 1884.
- Rudd, Jill and Val Gough.. Eds. *Charlotte Perkins Gilman: Optimist Reformer*. Iowa City: U Iowa P, 1999.
- Sala, George Augustus. *America Revisited*. 1882.
- Schuyler, William. "Kate Chopin." *The Writer* 7 August 1894. 115-17.
- Seidel, Kathryn, Lee. "Picture Perfect: Painting in *The Awakening*." 227-236. -----*Southern Belle in the American Novel*. Gainesville, FL: UP Florida, 1985.
- Senter, Carolyn. "Creole Poets on the Verge of a Nation." Kein, 2000.
- Shapiro, Norman R. *Creole Echoes: the Francophone Poetry of Nineteenth-Century Louisiana* Tr. Norman R. Shapiro with Intro by M. Lynn Weiss and Forward by Werner Sollors. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004.
- Shell, Marc and Werner Sollors. *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature: A Reader of Original Texts with English Translations*. New York: New York UP, 2000.
- Socola, Edward M. "Charles Gayarré: A Biography." University of Pennsylvania. 1954.
- Sollors, Werner. "Foreword." Shapiro. 2004.
- Special Exhibits. "People." *Louisiana State University Library*. (6/26/2004). www.lib.lsu.edu/special/exhibits/croele/People/people.html.
- Stevenson, Elizabeth. *The Grass Lark: A Study of Lafcadio Hearn*. New Brunswick: Transaction, 1999. Originally published by Macmillan Co, 1961.
- Stevenson, Leslie. *Seven Theories of Human Nature*. New York: Oxford Up, 1974.
- Taylor, Joe Gray. *Negro Slavery in Louisiana*. New York: Negro UP, 1963.
- Thernstrom, Stephan, ed. *The Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* Cambridge, Belknap Press, 1980. 237.
- Thornton, Lawrence. "The Awakening: A Political Romance." in *American Literature* 52 (March 1980): 50-66

- Tinker, Edward Larocque. *Ecrits de Langue Francais en Louisiane*. Paris, 1932.
- *Lafcadio Hearn's American Days* Detroit: Gale Research Co.
1970. Originally published in 1924 in New York by Dodd, Mead and Co.
- Tocqueville, Alexis de. *Journey to America*. Trans, George Lawrence. Ed. J.P. Mayer.
Westport Conn: Greenwood P, 1981.
- Toth, Emily. *Unveiling Kate Chopin*. Jackson: U Mississippi P, 1999.
- Tregle, Joseph G. Jr. "Creoles and Americans." Hirsch and Logsdon. 1992. 131-189.
- . "Early New Orleans Society: A reappraisal. *Journal of Southern History XVIII*. February (1952): 20-36.
- Tunnell, Ted. *Crucible of Reconstruction: War, Radicalism, and Race in Louisiana 1862-1877* Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1984.
- Turner, Arlin Ed. *Critical Essays on George W. Cable*. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980.
- . *George Washington Cable: A Biography*. Durham, 1956:
- Twain, Mark. *Life on the Mississippi* (1882) Reprinted New York: PF Collier & Son, 1917.
- Wiese, Jason. "Paul Morphy: New Orleans's King of Chess." *The New Orleans Collection Quarterly XIX* : 1. Winter (2001) 8.
- Williamson, Joel. *A Rage for Order: Black/White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation*. New York: Oxford UP, 1986.
- Woodward. C. Vann. *The Future of the Past*: New York Oxford UP, 1989.
- . *Origins of the New South 1877-1913*. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1951.
- . *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*. New York: Oxford UP, 1974.
- Wynes, Charles E. ed. *Forgotten Voices: Dissenting Southerners in an Age of Conformity*. Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1967.
- Yu, Beongcheon. *An Ape of Gods: The Art and Thought of Lafcadio Hearn*.
Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1964.
- Ziff, Lazar. *The American 1890s: Life and Times of a Lost Generation*.
New York: Viking Press, 1966.

APPENDIX: POETRY

This section contains a representative sampling of Queyrouze's work, and does not contain, by any means, her entire oeuvre, but among these poems, one can find a voice of rebellion and elegy, one that speaks from a lost cultural moment. These translations comprise my work of salvation, one that attempts to re-capture a voice that belongs in our canonical garden.

As to translation work, I will rely on the advice of those who have gone before me. Lafcadio Hearn makes his observations about this endeavor:

It is by no means sufficient to reproduce the general meaning of a sentence:--it is equally necessary to obtain a just equivalent for each word, on regard to force, colour, and form,--and to preserve, so far as possible, the original construction of the phrase, the peculiarity of the rhetoric A most laborious, cautious . . . work . . . A work requiring intense applications, wearisome research
(McWilliams 179).

Almost sixty years later, Norman Shapiro writes about his translations of poetry in the anthology *Creole Echoes*, saying

though always working with a text created by another, every translator, by choosing from a vast number of possibilities, leaves a personal mark on the work undertaken As ever, I have been guided in my translations—my re-creations—by the fundamental desire to carry across into English both the message of these poems and their manner (xxi-xxiii).

My intentions have been the same, and to that end, I have offered the most exact meaning of her lines of poetry as possible, but in doing so, had to eschew her rhyming patterns. In any attempt to duplicate the musicality and meter of each line, I would have had to sacrifice, in many places, the elegance of her sentiments—and that I could not do.

Contents in Alphabetical Order

<i>Agonie</i>	237
<i>Allegorie</i>	238
<i>Arrigo Boito</i>	239
<i>Atlas</i>	240
<i>Caryatis</i>	244
<i>Ce qu'ont dit les Montagnes</i>	245
<i>Le Désir</i>	249
<i>Fatôme d'Occident</i>	250
<i>A La France</i>	251
<i>In Graeciam</i>	252
<i>Imprecatio</i>	255
<i>Impromptu I</i>	256
<i>Impromptu II</i>	258
<i>Lolotte</i>	259
<i>Nocturne</i>	261
<i>A l'Opera</i>	262
<i>Ad Pennam</i>	264
<i>Parce Nocere</i>	265
<i>Phyrne</i>	266
<i>L'Regret</i>	267
<i>Response</i>	270

<i>Resurge</i>	271
<i>Somniavi</i>	272
<i>Sonnet</i>	273
<i>Sonnet a Magda Turpin</i>	274
<i>Suite Dépêche</i>	275
<i>Vision</i>	276

“Agonie”

Mon âme avait jadis une chère patrie
Où le chêne puissant de l’amitié croissait.
Pour soutenir le ciel sa cime se dressait
Et ses rameaux chantelent à l’ étoille fleurie.

A son ombre s’ouvrait, fille de l’Ionie,
La tendre violette; et sans peur mûrissait
La moisson de l’espoir q’un rayon caressait
Etait-ce donc un rêve en mon âme meurtrie?

Quel insecte a rongé le bel arbre vainqueur?
Quel parasite a bu la sève de son cœur?
On n’entend plus les chants dans la haute ramée;

Une pesante nuit tombe de l’au delà;
L’étoile s’est éteinte et la fleur s’est fermée.
C’était un rêve, hélas un rêve tout cela!

24 Aout 1911 Constant Beauvais

“Agony”

Once my soul held a cherished vision
and like a tree, it grew in strength and love.
Its very summit held the skies aloft
with branches blooming among the stars.

The night sky opened for the daughter of Ionie;
the tender violets bloomed without fear,
the harvest of hope blessed by light.
So when were the dreams of souls broken?

What insidious worm began to gnaw at its core?
Which parasite drank up the sap of its heart
and silenced the music of the heavens?

Leaving my soul in the darkness of tombs
with its stars extinguished and blossoms closed.
It was a dream, alas! A dream all!

--September 24, 1911

“Allegorie”

Pensée d'un Créole

Du vieux tronc desséché les rameaux sont détruits.
Ils n'avaient plus ni fleurs, si frondaison, ni fruits.
Autour du flanc stérile une liane avide
Euroule ses anneaux, et par cent lèvres. vide
La source de sa vie. Et déjà sur son front,
L'arbre spectre a senti, comme un vivant affront.
Eclorre et resplendir une fleur étrangère
Qui se balance aux vents parasite et légère.

-Constant Beauvais

Nouvelle-Orleans mai 1891

Allegory: The Passing of the Creole

In the old trunk is a withered branch that is destroyed.
There are no more flowers, foliage, or fruits.
Around its barren surface a voracious vine
Surrounds it, climbing and overrunning it. Empty
Is the source of life. Even worse, the face of
This ghostly tree can feel a living insult:
There upon it hatches and gleams a strange flower
With the breath of a parasite that feeds itself on meager light.

L'Abeille June 21, 1891

“Par Arrigo Boita”

“Sonnet”

*Hommage et remerciement à l'illuire auteur de
“Mefistofele”*

Arrigo Boito

Tous les anneaux d'or fin qu'à tes blanca doigts d'écume
Les dogos ont passé, je voudrais les ravir,
O folie Adriatique, aux écrins de saphir
De ton trésor étrange, ét j'en ferals ma plume.

Invincible et magique. A l'encensoir qu'allume
Dans l'oranger en fleurs le sylphe du désir,
Je viendrais la tremper; à l'alle du plaisir
Je prendrais sa poussière, à la vapeur qui fume

Sur le flanc des côteaux, le soufflé fulgurant
Des fannes de Falerne; au volcan dévorant
La flamme dont rêvait sur son roc Prométhée.

Puis de tous ces rayons, Maitre je te ferais
Un sonnet plus fragrant que le miel d'Aristée;
Et ma plume et mon coeur ensuite briserais
--Constant Beauvais 1894

“For Arrigo Boito”

All the rings of fine gold circle your white fingers like dross
I will pass all others and would like to delight
In you in Adriatic madness and take the sapphire jewel case
Of your strange treasures and unfurl my pen.

Invincible and magical. The censer of light
In the color of orange blossoms, the sylph of desire,
I would come and be tempted to seek pleasure
I would like to take his magical dust and his misty vapor

On the flanks of the hills, the stabbing light breaks
Of Falerne's fans, and the volcano devours
The flame where Prometheus' rock lies

Then of all these rays, maestro, I would make
A sonnet more fragrant than the honey of Aristee
And my pen and my heart would break.

L'Abeille December 23, 1894

“Atlas”

Sur ma route tomba, soudain, une ombre énorme,
Et, dans le clair azur, se profilia, difforme,
Et courbant en vaincu les genoux, un géant.
Son front lourd se penchait sur l'espace béant,
Et j'entendis craquer l'épaule de l'athlète
Sous son faix sidéral tandis que la tempête
Lui jetait en grondant sa couronne d'éclairs
Et son sceptre de foudre.

“O toi de l'univers

Sombre cariatide! Atlas, forcat du bain
Immensité! Tu vis rouler de sa montagne
Jusqu'aux flots de l'oubli Sisyphe délivré.
Sur sa roue Ixion, hagard, désespéré
Enfin s'est endormi; lève-toi donc, secoue
Ton Olympe sans dieux désormais et dénoue
Tes muscles engourdis.”

Le monstre, sans bouger,

Releva sa prunelle où semblait se figer
L'éternité brumeuse et, de sa voix pareille
A l'écho du tonnerre, il répondit: Je veille
Dans la nuit qui remplit ton oeil, et je sais tout.
Oui, l'Olympe est désert, Prométhée est debout;
Des damnés éternels, moi le dernier, je reste.
Ecoute et tu sauras. Quand Jupiter, d'un geste,
Eut ployé mes durs reins l'horrible fardeau,
Je ne voulais rien voir à travers le rideau
De mes pleurs fulgurants; et, fermé dans moi-même,
Je contemplais mon âme où hurlait le blasphème.
Mais un jour je sentis, sur ma paupière en feu,
Comme un frolement d'aile et, sur l'unfini bleu,

J'entr'ouvris mes yeux las et je vis. Ô merveille!
Passer en bourdonnant et semblable à l'abeille
Qui va chercher son miel, une planète d'or
Et puis encore une autre, et, prenant leur essor
Autour de mon front noir, les innombrables mondes
Ont tendu les rayons de leurs harpes profondes.
Sur mon cou moins meurtri l'Olympe s'allégea;
Une étoile nouvelle avait chassé déjà,
De son fouet lumineux, les fleurs dieux de la Grèce,
Et je les entendis, surpris dans leur ivresse,
Laisser tomber la coupe et s'enfuir du banquet
Pour descendre au Néant le chemin qu'indiquait
Un doigt mystérieux, fait di'ombre et de lumière.

Une voix quie me lit chanceler en arrière
 Me dit: Va maintenant; ton temps est consommé.
 Rejoins-les. Ne crains point que le monde abîmé
 Dans le gouffre sans fond se fracasse en atomes;
 Car j'ai, pur étayer mes superbes royaumes,
 Le bois impériesable et sanglant de ma Croix.
 Et moi, je répondis à la divine Voix:
 O Seigneur, laisse-moi, sous le poids de ta gloire,
 Me courber à jamais, autant que le mémoire
 Des soleils durera. Tandis qu'Ahasvérus
 Monte vers ton pardon à travers Arcturus,
 Aldébaran farouche et ta poussière d'astre,
 Moi, je veux être, ô Dieu, l'immobile pilastre
 Qui soutient ta splendeur, et sentir sur mon flanc
 S'appesantir, ton pied où perle encor ton sang.
 Constant Beauvais 25 Dec. 1901

“Atlas”

On my descending path, suddenly I saw an enormous shadow
 And, against the clear sky was a deformed profile
 Of a Giant bending at the knees.
 His heavy face looked out into beautiful space.
 And I expected his athletic shoulders to crack
 Under the awesome burden while the tempest
 Blasted him, roaring over his flashing crown
 And his lightning scepter.

“Oh you of the universe
 Dark Caryatid!¹ Atlas, convict of a prison
 Immense! You live to roll these mountains
 Into the waves of forgetfulness that Sisyphus carried
 Under Ixion's² wheel, haggard and despairing,
 At last you rest; then once again you rise shaking,
 Your godless Olympus reviving
 Your deadened muscles.”

The monster cannot move
 Yet seems to turn to his pupil and stops

¹ priestess of Karyai in ancient Greece, or an architectural pillar in the shape of a draped woman.

² He was the Etruscan god who is often depicted on a crucified wheel. He was a Thessalian king who killed his relative. Zeus gave him refuge, but when Ixion tried to seduce Hera, he was condemned to turn on a wheel for eternity.

In the misty eternity, and in a voice that echoes
like the thunder to say: I watch
In the night that fills your eyes, and I know all.
Yes, the Olympus is deserted, but Prometheus is standing;
Cursed for eternity. I am the last one; I remain.
Listen and you will know. Jupiter in a gesture
Left upon my back this horrible burden.
No more do I wish to see through this curtain
Of my dazzling tears, so inscrutable into my very core.
I contemplate my soul or scream blasphemy.
Until one day I felt upon my eyelids on fire
A touch like a wing from the infinite blue.

I opened my eyes at last-- and I lived. Oh Wonder!
Passing by was a humming like a bee
That was looking for its honey, a planet of gold,
And then again another, and they leapt
about my black forehead, and countless worlds
cast rays like profound harps.
On my less bruised neck Olympus lighted
A new star that hunted again
With its luminous whip the proud gods of Greece,
As they heard, they were surprised in their rapture
And recoiled from the sting to flee the banquet
To descend into the Void that was indicated
By a mysterious finger
One way shadow and the other light.

A voice that knew how I wavered
said to me: Go now; your time is over.
Rejoin them. Do not fear this worldly abyss
In this gulf without end, all crashes into atoms
For I have only the pure and steadfast in my supreme kingdom,
Imperishable wood and the blood of my Cross
And so I responded to the divine voice:
O Lord, leave me under the weight of your glory
I will never bend, as long as the memory
of these suns endures. While Ahasvérus¹

¹ Known as the "Wandering Jew." Much legend surrounds this figure. Most likely, Queyrrouze was referring to Pilate's servant who struck Christ as he was carrying his cross—who would not allow Christ to rest. In return, Christ told him to await his Second Coming—thus condemning Ahasverus to live for centuries. Even after Ahasverus repented, his curse was not lifted.

climbs towards your pardon across Arcturus,¹
wild Aldébaran,² and your star dust.
And I, God, I want to become an unmoving pillar
that supports your splendor, and feel upon my flank
The weight of your foot or a drop of your blood.

L'Abeille December 25, 1901 (Christmas Day)

¹ Also known as Alpha Bootis. This is a very bright orange star—the 4th brightest in the sky. It is one of the three stars that divide the sky in thirds. It is in the constellation of the Herdsman (Bootes) and is called the “Bear Watcher.” (Arktos=bear Gr.). It follows Ursa Major (Greater Bear) around the north pole.

² Also known as Alpha Tauri, the giant red star and the brightest star of Taurus—it is the bull’s eye. It is the “follower” because it follows the Seven Sisters (Pleiades). (Aldebaran=Torch Gr.) According to the Persians, it is one of the four Royal Stars.

Note: According to *Who’s Who in Classical Mythology*. Ed. Michael Grant and John Hazel, New York Oxford UP, 1993:

Atlas (the one who endures or carries) was supposedly charged with guarding the gates to heaven and golden apples, but is often described as holding up the sky.

“Caryatis”

*Animam non cruciare, non
perducere ad contempticuem.*

Sur ton front de granit las massive architrave
Pèse a travers les temps, sans jamais te courber.
Et ton large regard voit croître et seccomber
Les peuples en délire l’humanité hâve.

Et bien des fois la foudre effleura ton oeil grave
Et, grondant sur toi, fit l’edifice trembler.
Mais tu restes debout—Et moi prêt à tomber
Sous le poids du dégoût, je me dresse plus brave,
Et ne veux point fléchir—Entassez la douleur
Sur la douleur encore, sculptes bien le malheur,
Ensuite posez-le sur mon âme en détresse;

Soit, mais pas un soupir ne vous révéra
L’agonie où s’éteint ma suprême tendresse,
Ma dernière pitié pour tout ce qui-sera.
3 mars 1898 Constant Beauvais

Over your head, you hold the massive granite architecture
Through the breadth of time
Never have you bent
And your far reaching look grows and
Sees the delirious passage of humanity

And several times that lighting has engraved your eyes
And scolded the temple, trembling
But your remained standing while I am ready to fall
Under the weight of such---
Seeing you, I stand up braver
And not all desires that weigh upon me in pain
In my pain, sculptor of misfortune
Next to put my soul in distress

Be, but not a sign, not our dream of mortal agony or extinguished itself in supreme
kindness,
For my pitiable back and all that will be.

L’Abeille March 3, 1898

“Ce qu’ont dit les Montagnes”

La nuit des temps pesait sur les sommets sacrés
Où les siècles lointains, dans la brume rentrés,
Spectres géants voilés d’un linceul de mystère,
Rêvent en écoutant les échos de la terre
Que leur porte parfois la tempête en fuyant.
Tout-à-coup éclata, dans le calme effrayant,
Un formidable appel où vibraient l’harmonie
Des premiers chants du monde et le cri d’agonie
D’une création retombée au néant.
Et la multiple voix, vers l’espace béant,
Clama: Courbe ton front, ô zénith, pour m’entendre.
Je suis l’Himalaya. Jadis j’ai vu s’entendre
La main de l’Innommé qui sculpta le chaos.
Et cette main tenait le plus pur des joyaux:
Astre serti d’argile; esprit flamme de l’être.
Puis aussitôt je vis le redoutable Maître
D’une larme effacer l’ébauche de beauté
Qu’il avait modelée en son éternité.
Mais au-dessus des flots planait l’âme immortelle
De son oeuvre d’amour, si plaintive et si belle
Encor, qu’il pardonna.—J’ai vu ces choses-là.
Sur mon flanc j’ai senti, venant de l’au-delà,
Jaillir l’humanité jusqu’à l’immense plaine,
Où, lasse de traîner son invisible chaîne,
Elle voulut bâtir ses Babels de granit,
De science et de rêve et bondir en bandit
Jusqu’à son Dieu voilé, gigantesque limite
De l’illimité même.

Au sol israélite,
Sinaï, secouant sa crinière d’éclairs,
Fit retentir sa voix qui sonna dans les airs
Comme un vibrant écho des trompettes sacrées
Dont l’éclat fit trembler les tribus égarées.
“Nul plus que moi n’est grand, car je suis Sinaï.
Sur mon front reposa le pied d’Adonaï
Tandis qu’il répétait sa parole éternelle
Au prophète intrépide ; et j’ai vu l’étincelle
Du Verbe féconder les sillons à venir.
Mon épaule a porté les tables de saphir,
Et le poids fut si lourd qu’elle en est encor lasse.”

Une flamme embrasa les hauteurs du Parnasse,
Et l’on vit dans sa pourpre Hélios triomphant

Qui dominait le monde et tout-à-coup le vent
Qui vient de l'infini fit résonner sa lyre,
Pendant que s'éveillait, en un divin délire
La montage du dieu.---Salut, fier Apollon!
C'est vers toi qu'à jamais s'élance en tourbillon
L'essaim de l'idéal, de l'extase et du rêve.
Le diadème roule à l'abîme le glaive,
Las de frapper, se brise; à son tour chaque dieu
Va dormir dans l'exil. Mais ton souffle de feu,
Repeuplant l'univers, rend aux specters leur âme
Et redonne la vie à tous, même à l'infâme.
Toi seul es immortel, o superbe Hélios!
Maître de mes sommets, père d'Asclépios.”
La montagne se tut et sur son flanc sonore
Palpita, fugitif, un flamboiement d'aurore.

Alors, impérieux, le Palatin parla;
Et dans son rude accent on distinguait l'éclat
Du choc des boucliers et la voix des batailles.
“Je dormais inconnu, quand soudain mes entrailles
Frémirant sous le soc sacré que Romulus,
L' élu des dieux, guidait; et le sang de Rémus
Vint féconder mon sein et ma moisson fut Rome!
Quel est donc après moi le dieu, le mont ou l'homme
Qui pablara de gloire?”

Un souffle dif: c'est moi
Qui parlerai; moi l'humble et qui connus l'effroi
Des supplices sans nom, des sombres agonies.
Je suis le Golgotha, frère des gémonies.
Mais un jour j'ai senti, captif et trébuchant,
Un Dieu vêtu de chair qui montait mon penchant.
Puis alors s'enfonça comme un glaive de flamme
Au plus profond de moi; c'était la croix infâme
Qui se dressait parmi le peuple rugissant.
O montagnes! vos dieux ont demandé du sang;
Et Lui, donnait le sien pour son rêve sublime.
Pour recevoir ses pleurs et son pardon, l'abîme
A tendu son calice étoilé; les soleils
Sont venus entourer de leurs nimbes vermeils
Le doux front déchiré sous sa couronne infime.
Et le noir Golgotha, sinistre champ du crime,
Devint le marchepied de la Divinité
Et reste au senile d'azur de son éternité.

“What the Mountains Said”

Night weighed heavy upon the sacred summits
Where the distant centuries in returning mists,
Like giant specters veiled in shrouds of mystery,
Listened to the echoes of the earth
Through a door that sometimes opened fleetingly.
All at once in the dreadful calm
There was heard the formidable vibrant harmonious cry
Of the first song of the world and the mortal cries of agony
Of Creation falling once again into the void.
In many voices towards a gaping space,
They all cried out: Bend your face, o zenith, to me.
I am the Himalaya. Once I knew
An unknown hand that carved us from chaos,
And this hand carried the purest of jewels,
The star of day, the flaming spirit of Being,
And when I saw this immense fearsome master
Tears etched my face at its incredible beauty
That was modeled after eternity,
Rising above the immortal souls,
This, his work and his love, so plaintive, so beautiful,
So forgiving. I have seen these things
While upon my flanks I have felt
Rising humanity flooding the immense plains
Where, they tire of the invisible chain
And turn to build great granite towers of Babel,
Where science robbed them of the dream of knowledge
Because their God is veiled in the infinite limits
Of the unlimited.

Oh sun of Israel,
Sinai, shakes his mane of lighting,
His voice resounding through the air
Like vibrant echoes of sacred trumpets,
Its brightness striking the wayward tribes.
“Surely, there is nothing more than this, Siniai,
for on my forehead rests the foot of Adonis
as I keep repeating the eternal words,
the pregnant Verb of what is to come,
while my shoulders carry the sapphire sky
With weight so heavy that weariness returns.”

There is a flame embracing the heights of Parnassus
Where triumphant Helios reigns

With his dominance over the world, where the sudden wind
That comes from the infinite resounds the lyre,
Awakening into a divine ecstasy
The mountains of the gods. Hail fiery Apollo!
Towards you the whirlwind swarms,
Towards the ideals, the ecstasies and the dreams.
The diadem rocks beneath the sword,
Too tired to strike, it breaks, for every god, in turn,
Will sleep in exile but for you, who with fiery breath
Replenishes the universe, returning the souls to their specters.
You are immortal, almighty Helios!
Master of my summits, father of Asclepius.”
Upon my mountain’s sleeping flanks
Come your fleeting flames of dawn.

Then imperial Palatine speaks:
And in his rough accents, he speaks of the bright
Clash of the shields and the battle cries.
“I slept unaware, and when I awoke
I was crushed under the sacred plow of Romulus
And the elected gods called for the blood of Remus
Which fertilized my breast-- and the harvest was Rome!
Where therefore is my god, the mountain, or the man,
Where the words of glory?”

Now comes another voice: I speak
with humility and dreadful remembrance
Of nameless tortures and dark mortal agonies.
I am Golgotha, Brother of twins.
On that day I felt, captive and trembling,
A living God against my flesh inclining
Thrust with a flaming sword,
And in profound mute witness I saw a flaming cross
Erected among the roaring people.
O mountains! The gods demanded your blood,
All for the sublime dream
Of tears for forgiveness, the abyss
Reached for the stars, the suns
Surrounded His head with a radiant halo;
His soft forehead was torn under an infamous crown,
And I, black Golgotha, the field of this sinister crime,
Who knew the footfalls of a God
Remain still under the blue heavens of an eternal sun.

1911

“Le Désir”

Gran duol me prese al cor. Dante.—Inferno
Perché cantando il duol si
disacerba. Petrarca.

Un baiser que jamais la lèvre saisit.
Une étoile attirant le papillon caprice,
Jusqu’à ce que son vol se lasse et s’alourdisse;
Un appel insensé l’écho nous redit;

Une ombre qui fait signe et dans l’ombre s’enfuit,
Fantôme que l’on nomme Idéal, Béatrice;
Espérance enlacée au regret; précipice
Où flottent Paolo, Francesca dans leur nuit;

O Désir, monstre ailé, phalène sidérale!
O démon quie nous tends une toile infernale
Où l’insecte, la fleur, l’homme vient expirer:

Que de genoux meurtris, que de mains étendues!
Que l’homme est malheureux, vivant pour t’adorer,
Et quels soleils naîtront de nos larmes perdues.

Constant Beauvais--*Journal de l’Athénée*

“The Desire”

The kiss that never reaches the lips.
The whimsy of a butterfly attracted to a star,
Even as it grows heavy and weary;
The senseless cry that echoes and then repeats.

The shadow marks but in a shadow flees,
A phantom with the name, Ideal, Beatrice;
Hope mixed with regret, a precipice
Where Paolo floats and Francesca remains in darkness.

Oh Desire, winged monster, a moth towards the stars,
Oh demon, that extends across the vast canopy
Where all insects, flowers and mankind expire.

Kneeling in pain with hands outstretched!
It is mankind’s misfortune to live and to love
where rising suns give birth to our lost tears.

“Fantôme d’Occident a Lafcadio Hearn au Japon”

Le chrysanthème d'or au ciel a'épanouit
La Nuit a sur son flanc, denoué sans contrainte
Sa zone de mystère; et, d'une étrange étreinte,
Le croissant grêle tient, sous sa griffe qui luit,

Le spectre de la Lune, et s'apprête sans bruit
A jouer à la paume avec sa face éteinte.
--Un fantôme lointain, vague ainsi qu'une plainte,
Tout-à-coup a passé, vois, il s'évanouit.

Il vient de ce pays où la Nuit blonde et pure
Jamais entièrement ne défait sa ceinture;
Où dans l'azur fleurit, comme un b'anc magnolia,

La lune éclore auprès des tremblantes étoiles
Aux prunelles en pleurs; où l'ombre d'Ophélia
Dans le fleuve profond semble trainer ses voiles.
Constant Beauvais Louisiana 1894

“Phantom of the Occident: Lafcadio Hearn”

The golden Chrysanthemum now blooms
Without restraint under the vast night skies
In a place of mystery, and in a strange embrace
The growing slender threads catch the light.

The ghost of the moon appears in the quiet
Pretending to hide its face with its palms.
--A distant phantom, with a vague complaint,
All at once it disappears, fainting away.

It comes from this country where the pure and blond Night
Can never entirely escape the bonds that tie,
Of azure blooms and white magnolias.

The moon gives birth to trembling stars,
Each one a tearful pupil, where like the shadow of Ophelia
In a deep river, they cast their veils.

L'Abeille December 23, 1894

“O France”

O France, je voudrais, comme un amant jaloux
Trouver des mots nouveaux, une langue inconnue,
Des accents dont jamais n’a retenti la nue,
Pour dire mon amour, si profonde et si deux.

Ainsi que mes aïeux le front sur tes genoux,
Je voudrais, une fois le ongue nuit venue,
M’endormir, en sentant autour de ma chair
Ton étreinte pareille au baiser de l’époux;

Tandis que monterait mon âme à le lumineuse
Avec l’épi tremblant sous l’humide paupière
Du bluet matinal, dans le frêle encensoir

Des violettes, et, que du sang de mes veines,
Le rayon rutilant rougirait le ressort
Et ferait déborder les vastes coupes pleines.

“Oh France”

Oh France, I wish, like a jealous lover
To find new words in an unknown language
In accents as profound and soft as clouds
To speak of love.

I pray upon my knees with my eyes closed
For the time to come to welcome night
So in my sleep I could feel upon my flesh
The embrace and kisses of a spouse.

Before my soul climbs to the light
With ears trembling, and tearful eyes
That wake to the frail light of morning, blue

as violets, and feel the blood in my veins
Like sparkling grapes pressed into wine
To fill to overflowing our loving cup.

L’Abeille 1892

"In Graeciam"

Hommage douloureux rendu à Monsieur L. Placide Canonge l'ami tant regretté, mort le 22 Janvier 1893.

Ta main a donc laissé glisser le frêle amphore,
Pleine encor d'hydromel; et le vase sonore
S'est brisé, répandant sa fragrante liqueur.
La violette Hellène y croîtra. Dans son coeur
Je puiseria le miel qu'empotait à l'Hymette
L'abille à lance d'or, se pressant, inquiète.
Puis j'en parfumerai mon poème sacré,
Et sur ton souvenir je les effeuillerai,
Mes vers triste et doux—A l'heure diaphane,
Lorsque le flanc des monts bleuit, viens au platane
Qui de son manteau d'ombre, en un passé lointain,
Abrita, frémissant l'harmonieux festin
Où Socrate raillait la rouge symposie,
Tandis que Péricles écoutait Aspasia.
Après d'Alcibiade était ta place. Viens,
Fils du pays des Dieux, et, si tu te souviens,
Au banquet garde bien, sur ta couche d'ivoire,
La place de mon spectre. Ainsi qu'aux temps de gloire.
De délire et d'amour, en cohorte ils viendront,
Les convives sans voix ceindre ton pâle front
Des verts rameaux du lierre avec des violettes,
Et te couronneront de blanche bandelettes.
--Sur les derniers sommets, le jour monte et s'enfuit,
Laisant flotter un pan de Chlamyde de qui luit:
Orgiaque reflet et pourpe sépulcrale!
Le deipnon-fantôme est dressé. La Cigale
Dans l'ombre fait vibrer son monocorde d'or
Et rythme vaguement tandis qu'elle s'endort,
Les chants silencieux qui montent de vos lèvres,
Ainsi qu'une fumée. Et le frisson des fièvres
Fait palpiter là-bas les constellations
A travers les rameaux, comme un vol d'alcyons,
Par l'aquilon surpris.

Soudain un froid étrange
A fait frémir mon flanc. Là, parmi la phalange
Des tombeaux affames, étreignant le granit
Quie vers toi s'inclinait, je rêvais, moi, maudit;
Moi qui toujours ai vu la foudre frapper l'arbre.
--Comme il est froid et lourd, ton blanc manteau de marbe!

Par trios fois l'Angelus à répété le Mot
Et mon chant commencé s'achève en un sanglot.

"In Graeciam"

The hand let go and dropped the fragile vessel
Once so full of mead, and the echoing vase
Is broken, spilling its fragrant liqueur.
Like Helen's violets, that fills our hearts
covering the mountains of Hymette,
Like the honey the bee carries
with its golden lance, full and restless
With its perfume, I will write my sacred poem to you,
And from my memories I will pluck
My verse, soft and sad, in this diaphanous hour
When the flanks of the mountains come to the plains
In their coat of shadows, so far away,
Sheltered, shuddered in a harmonious unity,
Where Socrates laughed at the red elixir,
Where Pedicles listened to Aspasia
With general Alcibides at his side. Come, now,
To the boundless banquet, and on your ivory chariot
Come to the place of spirits. This is the time of your glory,
Of desire and love. Your compatriots will come,
And these silent guests will circle your pale forehead with branches of ivory and violets
And will crown your head with white bandlettes.
---In the distant hills the day climbs to its end, fleeting
Light floating on mountain lakes
Casting an amber reflection on your violet sepulcher,
Preparing your spirit. In the shadows, the cicadas begin the golden monochord
Of their vague rhythm while you sleep,
And when their chant is silenced, the moment
Becomes but smoke and the shiver of fevers,
Yet the day lingers against the constellations
While the flights of birds etch the sky
in the rising north winds.

Suddenly a strange cold comes over me
Blowing against the flame and against the phalanx
Where the flare of tombs ignites the granite
Which towards you inclines, and I resist and curse

For I saw the thunderbolt strike the trees
Illuminating how cold, how heavy, is this white coat of marble.

Three times the Angelus repeated the word, and my song begins its ending with a sob.
L'Abeille January 22, 1893

“Imprecatio”

Tu nous a tous maudits. Mariquita la fe’le
Par-delà le tombeau ta malédiction
A flétri dans sa fleur notre race créole
Jadis race de preux. D’une autre nation,

Les enfants aux, frents blonds ont, selon ta parole
Broyé sous leur talon la génération
Du Franc et du Latin, la grandesse espagnole,
Et tous ceux qui savaient, d’égale passion.

Aimer, venger, hair , et pardonner . . peut-être
Et que nous reste t-il? La langue de l’ancetre
Par le fl’s dédaignée, aux chevets de granit.

Des ajeoux s’exilait . . . Complice de tu huiue
La grande fleuve aux lourds flots roulant hors de aon lit
Se repait de tombeaux du a l’abime il entraine
--Constant Beauvais

“Imprecatio”

Your curses are mine. Mariquita is like a wisp
Far beyond the tomb of your curses
For the fading flower of our Creole race
Once a proud race. The other nation

Those mere infants with their blonde looks and words
Crush under their heels the generations
Of the French and the Latin, the grand Spanish,
And all those who knew the same passion.

To love, to seek vengeance, to hate, to forgive . . . perhaps
And the rest? Our ancestors’ language
Is now denigrated and only found on headstones.

Cut off and exiled, we are ushered to the
The large rolling river where its heavy waves take us under
Taking all, carrying all, into the tomb of the abyss.

L’Abeille May 3, 1891

“Impromptu”

March 20, 1898

Je t’aurai, je le crains, cause quelque embarras
Par una surprise émue, en voyant sous son bras
Et presseï à tou flane courre un corps de sulfane
Helas, non plus deja la malehaneuse canne
Lui pourlant eût voulu rester fulete, ami.
Mars sa rivale antique. Et mon coeur a gému
Un instant—Mais apris, j ai loue ‘ta constance
Et une surs demandé par quelle-- vertance
Cette intruse arrogante avait, una for; pensé
Exiler cet aime talisman du Passé
De tou austere étreinte—Il est seul, san reproche
Ce Passé brenheureup, sur sou spectre rcoshe
Chaque trait du Present, fleui Gardeur et de for
--Or donc j’ar résolu respectant alte loi.
De nourrir eu tore âme, ainsi que la vestele
L’éteruelle chaleur qui du Passe’s exhale.

Sur la cause l’ autan qui reconnaît tou pas,
Repose toi sans crainte et ne redoule pas
Que l’autre, délaissie eu sou coiu obsequir souge
A transformer pour loi sa ler ise en mensourge

“Impromptu” 1898

I see you coming, and I fear, there will be some embarrassment,
And an uncomfortable surprise. I see under your arm,
Pressed against your side,
the dreaded walking cane.
Perhaps I will tell you we shall remain friends.
But I know Mars has an old rival. And my heart will gasp
For one instant before it rights itself.
This will require Virtue in me,
For this is only my wounded pride; thus I will
Dispatch remembrances of the Past,
Of one brief embrace, one without reproach.
But the blessed Past, like a returning ghost,
Tries to speak to the present about love and faith.
But I will vow to respect the laws of Virtue
And to nourish my soul as well as its vessel.
So that the lasting heat of the Past shall expire.

Because I now know your path
I can rest without fear or dread
And in a forlorn funereal dirge
Forsake your lie for my law.

--Manuscript March 20, 1898

“Impromptu” II

De mon balcon au vôtre, un long fil irisé
Est tendu ce matin; le vent n'a pas brisé
Ce pont aérien, cette soyeuse échelle.

Si j'étais Roméo, j'oserais bien gravir
Ces fragiles degrés pour aller vous ravir;
Et j'escaladeraï les cieus pour vons ma belle.

L'amour est se léger qu'il grimpernit, ma foi,
Sans rompre ce fil fin, mon enfant, jusqu'à toi
A moins qu'il u'expirât en chemin, de vertige.

Il redescend parfois lorsqu'il devrait monter;
Notre siècle est prudent faut-il s'en irriter?
Tant pis pour qui s'eu fâche et pour qui trop exige.

Autrefois on mourait pour l'amour; à présent
On vit n'importe comme. Il serait malséant
De demander aux gens une pareille preuve.

Mais votre Roméo s'avane. Dien merci,
Ce n'est qu'une araignée encote et le souci
Des amons, je le erois n'a rien qui vous émeuve.

“Lolotte”

Heureuse petite Lolotte,
Aves sa tête linotte,
Avic son cour de papillon!
Devant son mirror elle danse,
Et regarde avec complaisance
L éclat doré de son chignon.

Dand le rue elle s’imagine
Qu’à chaque pas elle fascine
Tous les beaux garçons qu’elle voit.
Au bal elle fait la coquette.
Et repond d’une voix distraite
Aux compliments qu’elle reçoit.

Heuresuse petitie Charlotts,
Elle s’aime, elle se dorlote;
Le sort la fit pur le plasir.
Pourquoi donc, à la fleur de l’âge,
S’enterrer dans la marriage?
Elle a bien le temps de choisir.

Prenons part à toutes les fêtes;
Faisons tourner toutes les têtes.
Tant pis spur les fous serieux,
Qui nous traiterone de perfide,
Et commettront un suicide.
En laissant de triste adieux.

“Lolotte”

Happy little Lolotte
with her head in the air
and the heart of a butterfly!
In the mirror she dances
and looks with satisfaction
at the gilded splendor of her hair.

In the street she imagines
that her every step captivates
all the handsome boys she sees.
At the dances she acts the ingenue
and responds without acknowledgment
to the compliments she receives.

Little happy Lolotte,
So loved, so pampered;
she charms purely for the pleasure of it all.
So why then, at the flower of her age
does she enter into marriage,
when she had all the time to choose?

But we all attend the party
and we all turn heads,
and take advantage of serious fools
and we all join in the treachery
to commit our suicide
so all that's left is farewell.

C.R.A.L. 1886

“Nocturne” (some words were not legible in the manuscript)

Viens à la vieille table où le vulgaire ennui
Mançais n'a fait poser sur nous sa main de glace
Oui, d'-- un réseau d'or, la lampenienius enlace,
---la --- qio souvent sur nous, sereine, à lui

Vien reouvrir avec moi ce'llivre; s'est celui
--- emble nous avons fermé. Voici la place
Nous v retrouverous, ne croia-to pas, la trace
D'une larme et l'écho de notre rire entil!

----- encor vibrer, harmonie
Tuine, d'en même luth, les cordes radieuses
Ne, ames se tendent sous le soufflé divin.

Et --- amins, en tourant les feuillets du poème,
S—obercheroont encore et sejeindront enfin.
Ami, comme autrefois, dans la douceur suprême.

“Nocturne”

We come together at this old table in our ennui
Before the hands of ice pass over us.
Yes, a tangled golden glow of light envelops us
And serenity comes to us in this place.

Come, review this book with me. It is the one
That will ease our confusion. Here is the place.
We choose not to believe that our lives are passing, but the trace
Of our tears and the echo of our laughter tells us so.

No, our stirring should be in harmony
Attuned on a lute with radiant chords
As our spirits become an offering to the Divine Breath.

Just as my hand turns these sheets of poetry
So, to, shall we be joined in the end,
I, you, as it has always been, in infinite sweetness.

--manuscript December 1, 1901

“a l’Opera”

Respectueusement dedie a M.L. Placide Canonge

*Ce ne sont pas des chants, ce ne sont que des larmes.
-- de Musset*

Nos fauteuils se touchaient; en doux accents vai queu

Violette chantait, troublée et pâissante,
Cet hymne appris trop tard, et qui brûlant no coeurs.

Les étreignait tours deux dans sa douceur puissante

Dans notre âme endormie éveillant les douleurs,
L'harmonie appelait de sa voix caressante
Les larmes que l'exces des injustes malheurs
tarit, les refusant à la peine croissante.

Qui n's pleuré, souffert? Et, qui l'ose avouer,
Un jour vient ou l'on croit que rien ne peut vibrer
Au fond de l'être humain, et que tout fait silence.

mais l'art sous son archet, en nous fit tressaillir.
ette corde d'or fin d'où la plainte s'elance,
Et nous fait vivre encore en nous faisant souffrir.

L'Abeille 1886

At the Opera dedicated to Placide Canonge
---It is not some songs, it is only some tears.
 Alfred de Musset

Our chairs were touching as the soft accents of
Violetta's song disturbed the space between us,
Her hymn learned too late burned into our hearts,
Embracing us both with powerful sweetness
Entering our sleep, awakening the pain.

The harmonious summons of the caressing voice
Called for tears at injustice and misfortune
Even as we tried to refuse the increasing pain.

For whom do we weep? And for what do we dare to claim?
At one time we believed that nothing could affect us
To the bottom of our being, that all was silence.

But the art of the archer is to make us quiver.
Pulling like a golden chain to places where silence moans
And we find the strength to live again only to suffer.
 L'Abeille 1886

“Ad Pennam”

D’or et de nacre fine aux refilete d-arc-en-ciel,
Tu n’étais qu’un joyau, j’en voulus faire un glaive;
Et nous avons tous deux combattu pour le rêve,
Sans chanceler au choc de l’étrange duel.

Je ne t’oignis jamais, I guerrière du miel
Des essaimis de l’Hymette. A la brûlante sève
De mon couer large ouvert tu t’abreuvas sans trêve,
Et ne’connus jamais le venin ni le fiel

Mais, en perdant la foi, j’ai perdu la vaillance.
La main qui t’avait mise, en gage d’alliance,
Dans ma main sans reproche, hélas, a donc farbli?

Oh! je ne voudrais pas, dans la sombre balance
Du vainqueur te jeter! Oh non. Plutôt un pli
Du fleuve pour suaire, où tomber en silence!
Constant Beauvais
Nouvelle-Orléans, 1896.

“Ad Pennam”

Gold and fine pearls are reflected in the sky
Like fine jewels, but I wanted to make it into a sword
As we both struggled for the same dream,
Without faltering in the clash of a strange duel.

I was never my original intent to fight over the honey
Of the swarm of Hymette. A burning leaves
My large heart still open for you even as you drank from it without pity
Never realizing that the venom you drank was bile.

But when I lost faith, I lost courage,
The hand I placed in yours was for our alliance
And I did not reproach you, but alas, was it not to reconcile?

Oh, I never wanted this dark struggle
Or wished for the power to defeat you! Oh no. Rather, for us to sway
In the shrouding river, where we could fall into silence.

“Parce Nocere”

Au paria qui passé, abreuvé d’infamie,
Et ployé sous la honte, as-tu tendu la main?
As-tu baigné ses pieds meurtris par le chemin?
As-tu lavé l’outrage eu sa face blêmie?

Pour le sauver, as tu de la foule ennemie
Affronté la huée; et fort et surhumain,
L’as-tu nommé ton frère et partagé le liu
De ton mince manteau sur sa tête endormie?

Alors malheur à toi! Bientôt tu connaîtras
La trahison qui broie et le coeur et le bras
-Puissant, l’aigle planait, cherchant parmi les flammes

Ton pie vierge, ô Justice assise au trépied d’or,
Quand du ravin fangeux où gisent les infâmes
Jaillit le plomb brûlant qui brisa son essor.

“Parce Nocere”

You are a passing traitor bathed in infamy
And bowed with shame, and you extend a hand?
Have you washed your feet that were hurt along the way?
Have you cleansed the outrage from your dirty face?
To save yourself from the foul enemy,
Affronted by their hisses, strong and superhuman,
Did you acknowledge your brother and share the light
And spread your coat over him while he slept?

Misfortune on you! Soon your cohorts
The treason that is in their hearts and the arms.
--Powerful, the eagle glides, searching among the ashes
For the virgin’s feet; O Justice, sitting upon his feet of gold
When the muddy ravine where the lair of infamy
Gushes and shoots up to break its flight.

--1894 the *Crusader* and *L’Abeille*

“Phyrne”

Reminiscence de l'esprit grec.

Rapriamus, amici,

Occasion am de die. Horace.

Si vous n'aviez pas tant demandé tant doute,
Ami, nous nous serions aimés, doux et fidèles;
Quand souffle l'ouragan, l'amour ouvre ses ailes
Et la voile s'enfuit loin d'un ciel redouté.

Si les fleurs t'ont donné leur parfum, leur beauté,
Pourquoi leur commander avec des airs rebelles
De ne sourire pas à d'autres, pauvres belles,
De garder pour un seul tant de suavité.

Pourquoi vouloir toujours que demain t'appartienne?
Cueille donc cette joie alors qu'elle est là t'enne;
Hier est un cercueil et demain un berceau.

Mais aujourd'hui le fruit est mûr, il faut y mordre;
Peut-être un scarabée en a pris un morceau,
Comme après toi le ver aussi viendra s'y tordre

.

“Turning”

If you had not so many urgings born of Doubt,
Love, we could have become so much more, sweet and true,
So that when the winds of strife would rend us,
We would have spread our wings of love
And sailed across the troubled skies.

For flowers surrender their beauty and perfume
Without your commands, and at their own bidding,
Smiling into blossoms, with their own sweet breath
If you do not pluck them too soon.

Why then do you hasten to make tomorrow yours?
To pluck the joy before it is born?
For yesterday is a coffin and tomorrow a cradle.

So taste of the fruit only in its season,
For each bite can become a prison,
And like the scarab who eats into flesh
You will turn in the walls of your own making. *-L'Abeille*

“Le Regret”

Deux fronts se sont penchés ensemble sur un livre,
Jeunes, graves tous deux; la lampe de vieux cuivre
Ouvre son large oeil d’or dans la profonde nuit,
Comme sur sa victime étincelle et reluit
La prunelle du fauve à travers les ténèbres.
Ils lisent un recit aux doux accents funèbres
Où palpite l’amour et chante la douleur;
Vers simples et navrants qu’inspira le malheur.
Dans lesquels à jamais pleure une voix de l’âme
Et que cet homme ému relit à cette femme.
Ces deux êtres sont-ils des amis, des amants?
Le sang qui de leurs coeurs presse les battements,
Ce sang est-il le même, et la même patrie
Vit-elle donc leurs yeux s’entr’ouvrir à la vie?
Non, rien ne les unit que la main du hasard;
L’avenir est entre eux, et bientôt leur regard
Ne rencontrera plus qu’une ombre insaisissable
Qui s’enfuira du coeur, tel qu’un flot sur le sable.
Le bonheur n’est-il pas comme l’algue de mer
Que la vague inquiète et, sur son sein amer
Entraînte et roule au loin, l’arrachant à sa plage.

Ils étaient arrivés à la dernière page,
Mais la voix qui lisait faiblit et s’altéra;
La regard, relevé tout-à-coup, s’éclaira,
Inondant de rayons des têtes pâlissantes.
Ainsi dans un ciel pur des clartés jaillissantes
Déchirant l’horizon, blanchissent les chemins.
Ils songent que jamais ne se joindront leurs mains.
Que leurs lèvres toujours doivent rester muettes,
Austères gardiens des révoltes secrètes.
Ils sentent dans leur sein le désespoir gronder;
L’aveu monte rapide et prêt à déborder.
Telle, en la coupe pleine, une liquier brûlante
Avant de s’épancher, reste un instant tremblante.
Mais l’aveu n’est tombé des lèvres ni des yeux;
La paupière est baissée, et l’oeil silencieux
Ne révèle plus rien; et les lèvres fermées
Ont laissé retomber les paroles aimées.

Dans l’ombre de la chamber, un reflet envolé
S’égare sur le mur, éclairant, isolé.

Le buste menaçant de Scévola farouche,
Auguel sourit de loin la chaste et fière bouche
De Diane, rêvant sous son masque bronzé
Que dans un angle obscur le sculpteur a posé.

“The Regret”

Together, they lean towards a book.
Young are these two. The old copper lamp
With it open eyes, pierces the profound darkness
Making them sparkle and shine,
Two pupils under its tawny breath.
They read together in two soft accents
Of thriving love and songs of sorrow,
Of simple things that inspire misfortune,
And the crying voice of the soul.
As he reads again to the woman beside him
One wonders, are they friends or lovers?
The blood of their hearts beat, pressing.
Their blood is the same, their homeland the same
But do they live in each other's eyes?
No, they are subject to the hand of Chance.
The future lies between them and their eyes
Will never meet, nor cross the impenetrable shadow.
Their hearts shall flee like waves on the sand,
Their happiness will bend like ocean seaweed
Unsettled by the waves; his bitter breast
Will Retreat, rolling far from the dunes.

They turn to another page,
But as he reads, his voice falters; there is a change
In him as the flood fades.
And with pure clarity the sky opens
tearing open the horizon, showing the way
Because they now know that their hands will never touch
And their lips will remain silent
For they will guard their inner secrets
And scold their hearts despairing
Even as the need to confess rises to overflowing.
Such is the searing wound, like a hot liqueur,
Before it rights itself, trembling for an instant
Before falling without a voice
Revealing nothing, and with silent eyes
They lower their eyes again to the familiar words.

In the shadow of the chamber, now there is one
Figure cast upon the wall, alone.
Nearby, the bust of the wild and menacing Scevola
Smiles at the chaste and fiery mouth
of Diana, reveling under his bronze mask
An obscure angle, put there by the sculptors' hand.

“Response a L. H.”

Medea superset---Sénèque

Medee, avez-vous dit; et vous aviez raison
De la nommer ainsi, cette femme à l’oeil somber,
Au Coeur farouche et fier, plein de revolte et d’ombre,
Et qui dans toute main d’ami, liet: Trahison!

Poète, fais tone mile, Elle fait son poison
Des maledictions, des prièrs sans nombre
Quie retombent des cieux, de chaque espoir qui somber.
Et des ris ebranlant les murs de la prison.

Va boire la rosee au calice quie tremble;
Prends pour toi les rayons que l’aurore rassemble;
Mais laisse lui la nuit et sa froide claret.

A l’endroit où tomba le bienfait croit la haine.
C’est là qu’est sa moisson quand dort l’humanite,
Et que vole sans bruit le nocturne phalène.
L’Abeille March 27, 1887

“Response to L. H.”

(note: L. H. is Lafcadio Hearn)

Medea, you have spoken the words of truth
and have taken your name, thus, woman of somber eyes
with a heart shy yet proud, filled with rebellion and shadow
And you hold the hand of a friend named: Treason!

Poets, make your honey, for she will make it poison
With curses and prayers without end
Calling from the heavens when hope grows dim,
And her screams will shake the walls of prison.

She drinks deep the dew of the rose’s trembling chalice;
Taking the rays of morning for her own
even as she sees in the night with cold clarity

the places of tombs that give rise to hate
where she will reap her harvest while humanity sleeps
and quietly claim her own like a moth in the night.
March 27, 1887

“Resurge”

Dans sa prison de brume où nul reflet ne luit,
Mon Rêve léthargique, informe sous la cendre
Des souvenirs froidis, a cru soudain entendre
Palpiter, effarés, les essaims de la nuit

Engourdis sur son flanc. Et, dans l’ombre qui bruit,
Un pan d’aurore pourpre est venu se suspendre
Aux lambris nébuleux où tremble et va s’entendre
L’aile d’or de l’Idée. Et mon Rêve, conduit

Par le mystique appel des strophes en délire,
A quitté sa prison de brume et, vers là lyre
Que nui ne voit d’en-bas, son essor l’a porté,

Tandis qu’autour de lui phalanges astrals
Tendent sur l’infini, vibrant de volupté
L’harmonieux réseau des cordes sidérleas.

Resurge

In the misty prison, with only reflected light
In lethargic reverie, under the dying rembers
Of cold memories, I saw a sudden flare.
Trembling, frightened by the swarms of night.

I crouched against a wall, then, in the shadows, the sounds
From a crimson apparition came, suspended in air,
Nebulous, and trembling, spreading its
Wings of New Thought. And my reveries were channeled

Into the mystery, harkening to the delerious verse,
Until I left my misty prison, following the music
Of that low voice, leaning towards my release

While around me there were astral lights
Stretching towards the infinite, vibrating with exquisite delight
In harmonious rays that stretched towards the stars.

“Somniavi”

Sur la roche rugueuse un liseron fragile
Se Traîne et cherche en vain un appui vers l’azur ;
Mais sur le sommet nu pas un tronc, pas un mur.
Seul, le vent vient tromper son étreinte inutile.

Plus bas c’est le vallon. Là croit le chene, asile
Du gui mystique ; là le lierre austere et dur
Soutient, du vieux donjon, le front qui penche, obscur ;
Et la vigne bondit, échevelée, agile,

A l’assaut des coteaux ; et c’est partout l’essor !
Alors au ciel lointain, par un suprême effort,
Le liseron tendit sa tremblante spirale

Et son pâle bouton ; et vers son pur désir
Un rayon descendit de la splendeur astrale;
Et l’on vit au zenith une étoile fleurir ! December 25 1908

“Somniavi”

On a rugged rock, there was a tangled fragile vine,
Trying in vain to climb to the sky
On the bare summit, but there was neither trunk nor wall,
So the wind came to undo its useless embrace.

Below in the valley, the ivy knows that the oak
Is the mystical refuge, and there the hardy ivy endures.
It covers an old dungeon, but it always faces the sky,
Until one day it leaps with wild abandon

Taking the hills, everywhere it leaps!
And with a supreme effort, even towards the distant sky
The humble weed aspires.

Its pale flowers spiral with pure desire
Until finally the rays of heaven descend in radiant splendor
Taking them to the sky, where they bloom into stars.

“Sonnet”

Decrescere pondus convenit.

Si jamais vous n’avez appris à mépriser
Ce que vous chérissiez; et gravi, le front bleme
Et les genoux saignante, la station supreme
Du Golgotha Soupçon; et bu, sans l’épuiser,

Au calice profond qu’on tremble de briser;
Et préiééré douter des dieux et de vous-meme;
Et comme Julien, jeté votre anathème
Et votre sang au ciel, sans pouvoir l’apaiser;

Si jamais vous n’avez songé qu’à cette meule
Formidable, le Vie, it faut que l’ame seule
Et semblable à Samson, tourne dans un’désert

Sans aube et sans étoile, et, qu’en ce noir délire,
Il fant, gladiateur, en succombant sourire;
Ah! ne blashphêmes-pas. Vous n’avez point souffert!

“Sonnet”

If ever you learned to despair
All that you had cherished, and rose up with your face smeared
And your knees bleeding, at the last station
Of the cross on Golgotha, and then drink without ever emptying

The deep chalice that makes you tremble close to breaking
And to doubt that you and the gods are the same;
And like Julien, without any comprehension
Cast your blood to the heavens without being able to appease;

If ever your dreams became grindstones and all seemed
Formidable, and Life was for you an empty soul
And Like Samson, you wandered in the desert

Without dawn and without stars in delirious darkness
Well then, gladiator, I am forced to smile
Ah! Do not blaspheme. You have not suffered!

L’Abeille 1896

“Sonnet”

“A mon amie Magda Turpin”

Hier je te pleurais, aujourd’hui je te chante.
As tu senti mes pleurs sur ton front endormi?
Entendras tu ma voix? Ton coeur a-t-il frémi
Quand ta mère écoutait, sans soufflé et suppliante

S’il palpitait encor?—De ton âme vaillante
Les accents des aimés la dent de l’ennemi,
Ne feront plus jaillir l’étincelle. Parmi
Les obacuts au-delà ton ombre trébuchante.

A vu se lever l’aube à laquelle sa fond
L’humaine passion; telle en l’enur profound,
L’étoile se dissout aux rayons de l’aurore.

Tes yeux se sont fermés comme se étoila fleux
Sous un soleil brûlant mais le bas meteor
Resplendit ton regard plus haut que la douleur.

“Sonnet for my friend Magda Turpin”

Yesterday I cried for you, today I sing for you.
Have you felt my tears upon your sleeping face?
Have you heard my voice? Your heart must have shuddered
When your mother spoke to you softly and imploringly.

Do you breathe again? Your friends
Speak of your valiant soul. The teeth of the enemy can do no more
Than break the sky.
Those obstacles, like shadows, stumble

When the dawn rises
With human passion; even the most profound
Star disappears in the rays of dawn.

You eyes are closed like those fading stars
Under a brilliant sun, but the meteor
Makes your face resplendent and raises you above the pain.

L’Abeille May 1891

“Suite Depeches”

Du sang de l’ennemi, je vous reconnais tous:
Galois aux glaives tourdis guerriers France aux frotns roux
J’ai vu de réfléter, dans chaque lame nue
Le soleil des combats. O légion venue
Des champs de Walhalla, va diriger ses coups
Des preux soldats de France, et que sous ton courroux
Tremble encore Mennemie, qu’un étreinte inconnue

Paralyse sa droite ! Oui, que le désespoir
Le poursuive, acharné, pressant son coursier noir
Que l’immonde démon des déroutes déchaîne
Tout l’essaim des terreurs—San cesse il eroire voir
Le galive flamboyant de le virge Lorraine
Etinceler aux cieux dans les brumes de soir

Suite Dépeches

. . .

The blood of my enemy, I recognize you
Gauls with your heavy swords,
You Frank warriors with your red faces.
I see reflected in your naked blades
The sun of combat. O legion who comes
From the fields of Walhalla, who will rain blows
On the valiant French soldiers, how your fury
Will make Mennemi tremble again in an unknown embrace
Paralyzing his rights, yes, that is despair.
The persecutor, fierce, urges his black steed,
That filthy foul demon of chaos unleashed,
And the never ending swarm of terror crosses against
The blazing swords of the virgin of Lorraine
Glittering against the sky in the mists of evening.

L’Abeille

“Vision”

Par un matin d’Avril, à l’heure où tout palpe,
Que la nature emue en un frisson s’agite,
Souriant au reveil sous son manteau d’azur,
Et que l’âme des fleurs s’exhale dans l’air pur,
J’errais le front courbe, l’âme lasse et meurtrie,
Suivant vers le passé ma rêverie,
Et je sentais en moi le blasphème gronder
Et tout un océan de mepris déborder;
Et je songeais toujours, quand des fleurs et de l’herbe
Surgit devant mes pas comme une blanche grebe
Faite un cimetière.

Etrange floraison!

Un rayon pâle et doux qui dorait un vieil arbre
Mettait une auréole au front d’un saint de marbe;
Le zéphyr, en passant, réveillait les rameaux,
Courbant sous son baiser la fleur des blancs tombeaux
Et dans ma somber nuit tout-à-coup vint à luire
Un peu de cet azur qui semblait me sourire.
Le blasphème impuissant se heurtait à la mort;
Sereine elle distait: “Silence! Ici tout dort.”
Un charme amer et doux me tint immobile;
Haletant, j’écoutais comme il faisait tranquille,
Mystérieuse étreinte où la Mort frissonnant,
Troublée en son repos par ce jour rayonnant
Se réchauffait, livide, aux amours printanières.
L’air vibrant, tout chargé de baisers, de prières;
A l’autel de la Mort, la vie en triomphant
Secouait sur le monde un flambeau dévorant.
Je sentis ma douleur s’envoler de mon âme
Comme un oiseau funèbre effrayé de la flamme;
J’oublai ces ongs jours noirs de doute et d’horreur,
Où, seul, désespéré, maudissant son erreur,
Pleurant l’illusion se trompeuse et se belle
L’homme déçu toujours, confiant et fidèle,
S’affaisse dans la lutte, accablé, tout sanglant,
Le couer plein de débris, et l’âme de néant.
Je n’étais plus qu’un marbe au regard immuable
Fixé sur l’invisible, et du froid ineffable
De ces gardiens des morts mon être s’engourdit,
Pénètre doucement d’un sommeil de granit!
Je vis avec l’esprit se presser dans l’espace
Le semis fécondant des âmes que Dieu chasse

Dans le nouveau sillon, germes de l'avenir,
Fragments de l'infini.

Puis vint le Souvenir,
Vision du Passé, don't le masque est étrange;
Extase et cauchemar, souriant profil d'ange
A la paupière humide, et soudain grimaçant,
Haineux, somber et tragique.

Un chaos manacant
Fait d'éclairs et de nuit, de choses innommées,
Envahit l'horizon, larves inanimées,
Informes et dormant au sein de l'avenir
Jusqu'à l'éclosion qui doit les réunir.
Une puissante main dans l'espace étendue
Tenait un arc immense, et, de loin entendue,
Une voix cria l'heure, et flèche vola:
C'était l'arc du Destin.

Mon esprit se troubla,
Étraint par l'invisible, à cette voix profonde
Tombant dans l'infini comme un écho qui gronde.
J' ne vis pas peser nos sombres passions,
Et je n'entendis pas le cri des nations.
Comme un torrent gonflé, débordant sur la plein,
Ravage la moisson, l'espoir de tant de peine,
Et, brutal, la matile aux calloux de son lit,
Ainsi le Temps rapide abat, brise et détruit
Les projets mûrissants, l'idéal, l'espérance,
Et roule dans son cours la joie et la souffrance,
Les peuples éperdus, broyés en tourbillon
Jusqu'à l'éternité.

L'orgueil, l'ambition,
Le fracas des plaisirs, tout s'éteint et tout passé,
Indistinctes vapeurs s'effaçant dans l'espace.

“Vision”

On a morning of April, at the hour when all awakens
And natures is enthralled into new life,
Smiling, awakening under an azure coat,
With the scent of flowers breathing into pure air,
I wander, with heavy head, tired heart,
And gloomy reverie, towards a statue,
And I feel roar blasphemy within me;
When I see all the flowers and herbs
Emerging into a white sepulcher sheet
Made of starry white flowers
Covering the grounds of tombs.

Strange blossoming!
Radiant and pale, they adorn the trees
And glow against the foreheads of marble saints
While the gentle passing breeze awakens winter branches
Bending to kiss the flowers over the tombs.
And within my dark thoughts there suddenly gleams
A little of the azure smiling sky
While the impotent blasphemy harkens towards death.
Serenely, a voice says: "Silence, all sleep here!"
And a bittersweet calm keeps me still;
Catching my breath, I listen to the tranquility
Embraced by the misery of quivering death
Troubled in its peace in the brightness of day
So much life still. And love
And the fullness of kisses sweet
Like prayers upon the altar of death, life is trimpahnt
Trembling like a devouring flame
I feel the searing pain enter my soul
Like a funeral bird, I fear the flame
I know the long dark days of doubt and of horror,
Of despair, curses, and failures,
And I cry out against the lovely lying illusion
Of mankind, confident and faithful
Subsiding in the struggle, defeated and bloody
With hearts in fragments and spirits empty

I stand like a marble saint, with unwavering regard
Transfixed and invisible, and ineffably cold
Like these guardians of death, I am numb,
Nothing penetrates my granite sleep;

Yet, I live, and my spirit still fills the air
Like a fertile seed of the souls God sows
In new furrows, planting the kernels of the future,
Each a fragment of the infinite.

These monuments,
Are visions of the past, with their weary masks
Hiding the invisible cold
These guardians of death
Are both ecstasy and nightmare,
Smiling with their angelic profiles
Yet with glittering, grimacing eyes,
Full of hate, death, and tragedy.

Oh, manacing chaos!
Flashes of lightning in the night of things unknown
Invading the horizons, like lifeless cocoons.
Formless, you sleep within the future,
Until the bursting forth, you will be re-united;
By a powerful hand, you will be sent forth
From his immense bow, into limitless regions,
With his voice crying, "Your hour as come!"
And your arrow will fly from the Archer of your destiny.

But my spirit is troubled,
Held by an invisible resonating voice
Falling into the infinite like an roaring echo.
And I know I will not live to plumb the depths of dark passions,
And I will not hear the cries of nations,
Like an expanding torrent, invading the lands
Ravaging the harvest. With hope dying in pain,
Brutally crushed back into stony furrows.
So swiftly time cuts us down, its winds destroying
The ripening fields, the enterprises, ideals, and dreams
And runs does in tis course all joy, and all suffering,
Of a bewildered people, ground down like chaff
In the whirlwind of eternity.

The pride, the ambition,
The throes of pleasure, all die, all pass,
Dissolving into vapor, diffusing into space.

VITA

Donna Meletio was born in Dallas, Texas, the daughter of a Greek father and an Irish mother. After attending a Catholic elementary school, she later enrolled in Hillcrest High school and left for the University of Texas at Austin in 1969. Before completing her degree, she married and moved to San Antonio, Texas, where she worked at a bank. Her first two daughters, Saran and Maegan, were born during this time. After a short tenure living in Tampa, Florida, and Winston-Salem, North Carolina (where her third daughter, Kate, was born), Donna returned to San Antonio and began restoring historical properties and managing real estate. At the same time, she began attending classes at a local community college. She became a licensed broker and expanded her real estate business while earning her bachelor's degree from the University of Texas San Antonio (UTSA) in 1990. She sold her business in 1993. After receiving her master's degree at UTSA in 1994, she began teaching freshman English, first at San Antonio College, then at UTSA and Trinity University. It was during this time that she began publishing her poetry and short stories in small press, earning the Corona Press awards for the poem "Life Still," and short story, "Forgotten Words." When she visited New Orleans in 1995 she happened upon the portrait of Leona Queyrouze who would become the subject of her dissertation. She applied to the doctoral program at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge with the goal of pursuing her research on Queyrouze. While completing her dissertation, she returned to San Antonio and resumed teaching at UTSA where she received teaching awards. She is currently a member of the Southern Conference of MLA, the Popular Culture Association, and the Texas Folklore society, and has presented her work at their

conferences. She earned her doctorate in August, 2005, and is working on a collection of Leona Queyrouze's poetry and a critical biography while pursuing her interest in various folklore projects.